



# Latin *for* Bird Lovers

Over 3,000  
bird names  
explored  
and explained

ROGER LEDERER & CAROL BURR

Latin  
*for*  
Bird  
Lovers





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To the individuals and organizations that help us to  
understand and appreciate birds and their unique  
contribution to a sustainable world

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# PREFACE

For most birdwatchers, a good field guide—*The Birds of Western North America*, *The Birds of Europe*, *The Birds of Australia*, the birds of wherever—is sufficient to identify birds in the field. These guides all come in a similar format: Next to the illustration of the species is its common name, typically in larger, bold type (e.g. Desert Lark), while the italicized scientific name (*Ammomanes deserti*) is smaller and lighter. Because birders are generally not interested in the taxonomic or evolutionary relationships of birds, scientific names seem to be of little use.

While most diving ducks have the genus name *Aythya* and most dabbling ducks *Anas*, bird lovers tend to refer to them as dabblers and divers. Although birdwatchers call all large predatory birds raptors, it is just a handy group name for eagles, hawks, and owls. *Empidonax* flycatchers that are difficult to identify are sometimes called “empees,” a shortened scientific name that has become a common name.

Scientific names, binomials, are used by scientists to define the exact evolutionary relationships of birds. Using Greco-Latin terms, these names are standardized across the world and are mostly descriptive. If the birdwatcher takes the time to look at these names, they will begin to notice interesting patterns and discover relationships between birds they may not have known about before. For example, there are several genera (plural of genus) of New World sparrows, such as

*Spizella*. The scientific name for the American Tree Sparrow, *Spizella arborea*, shows that it is more closely related to *Spizella passerina*, the Chipping Sparrow, than it is to *Chondestes grammacus*, the Lark Sparrow, even though they are all called sparrows.

Most scientific names are at least partly descriptive, such as *Corvus brachyrhynchos*, the American Crow, meaning a short-beaked crow (*brachy*, short, *rhynchos*, beak, *corvus*, crow). *Aix galericulata* comes from *Aix*, duck, *galer*, cap, and *cul*-, little, as in the Mandarin Duck, with a swept-back head crest. Some birds were named to honor an influential person such as an ornithologist, naturalist, politician, or royalty, as in *Estrilda kandti*, Kandt's Waxbill, after Richard Kandt, physician and explorer, and from the German *Wellenastrild*, Waxbill. Other names may describe the place the bird was first found, its color, or behavior. Occasionally, it includes the name of a mythical god, goddess, or creature. You may find that a little bit of research into scientific names opens up a whole new way of looking at and understanding birds.

*Latin for Bird Lovers* is not only about the origin of scientific names. We also try to explain a little about how and why birds are named and occasionally add tidbits of information about the birds themselves. The book can be picked up and read or referred to in any order in bits and pieces, like a typical dictionary or encyclopedia.

“But true birders, who used to be called bird-watchers, occupy, with other amateur naturalists, a small bywater of the scientific mind in which the naming of things is an overriding hunger. It might better be called bird-naming than bird-watching.

The more names, the more finely the distinctions are drawn, the better.”

—James Gorman, *New York Times*, Oct 22, 2002

# How to Use This Book

## ALPHABETICAL LISTINGS

Scientific terms appear alphabetically throughout for easy reference. For a more detailed explanation, see the Introduction to the A-Z Listings on p. 15.

A guide to pronunciation is provided and capital letters indicate where the emphasis should fall.

The scientific term.

**Aalge** *AL-jee*

Type of auk, from the Danish, as in *Uria aalge*, the Common Murre or Guillemot

An example of a bird name that features the Latin term is given, along with the bird's common name.

## GENUS PROFILE PAGES

Dotted throughout the book, feature pages examine the interesting characteristics of a particular genus of birds.



## LATIN IN ACTION

Feature boxes connect the history of scientific names to individual birds or groups of birds.

## FAMOUS BIRDERS

Read the stories of men and women whose enthusiasm for bird-watching has led them around the world, and whose observations have contributed to our understanding of our feathered friends.

## BIRD THEMES

In these pages some of the fascinating physical attributes and behaviors of birds are looked at in depth, highlighting any correlation between these aspects and their scientific names.





# A SHORT HISTORY OF BINOMIALS

A “binomial” is a double name. It is part of a formal system of taxonomy for naming all living things. Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish physician, botanist, and zoologist of the eighteenth century, is considered the father of taxonomy and the system of binomial nomenclature, in which his name is rendered *Carolus linnaeus*.

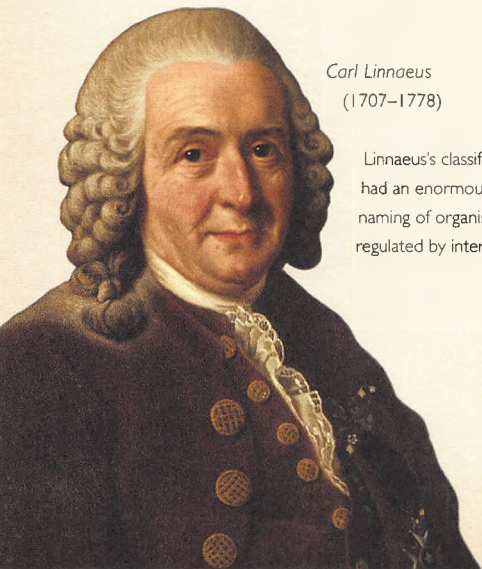
All living organisms are classified according to their evolutionary relationships and through the classification scheme they are given an individual binomial or scientific name that consists of a genus and species. Human beings, for example, are *Homo sapiens*, meaning they belong to the genus *Homo*, along with other now extinct species such as *Homo habilis* and *Homo erectus*, but are their own specific group, *sapiens*. In usage, the genus, in this case *Homo*, is always capitalized and either underlined or italicized. The species name or specific epithet, *sapiens*, is either underlined or italicized, but never capitalized. And the word “species,” as used in biology, is both singular and plural. (“Specie” is incorrect as it

means “coin.”) Species is often used interchangeably with the scientific name. Classifications change over time as new information develops, but it is a slow and thorough process so the classification scheme is quite stable.

A species is generally defined as a group of organisms that can interbreed and produce viable offspring. *Anas platyrhynchos*, the Mallard, cannot interbreed with *Melanerpes cactorum*, the White-fronted Woodpecker, or even with the more closely related *Anas strepera*, the Gadwall. The species concept continues to evolve with new genetic tools, and there are minor exceptions where different species do hybridize, but the system continues to be useful.

When Linnaeus created the binomial system, “New” Latin was used in Western Europe as the common language of science, and scientific names were in Latin or Greek. Scientific naming is governed by international codes, such as the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature (ICZN) for animals, and the International Code of Nomenclature (ICN) for algae, fungi, and plants.

You might see three names, a trinomial, as in the Red-shouldered Hawk, *Buteo lineatus*, which has five subspecies, *B. l. lineatus*, *B. l. elegans*, *B. l. alleni*, *B. l. extimis*, and *B. l. texanus*. In the hierarchy of taxonomy, only one name below the binomial, a “subspecies,” is allowed to denote different color forms or geographic races of a particular species. Hypothetically, all these subspecies can interbreed, but it may not happen if their ranges do not overlap. So whilst subspecies is a somewhat slippery concept, it is useful in delineating populations with distinguishing characteristics.



Carl Linnaeus  
(1707–1778)

Linnaeus's classification scheme had an enormous effect on the naming of organisms, now strictly regulated by international rules.

Thus, binomial nomenclature provides a global identification of particular bird species and defines their relationships to other birds. DNA studies over the past couple of decades are refining those relationships and name changes will continue to occur.

## Where do the names come from?

- Latin and Greek and occasionally other languages, as in *Anas platyrhynchos*, which comes from the Latin *Anas*, duck, and from the Greek *platy*, flat, and *rhynchos*, bill. *Gavia immer* is the Great Northern Loon or Diver, *Gavia* deriving from Latin, meaning ravenous sea bird, and *immer*, Swedish for ember-goose, referring to the dark color of the bird.
- Names of people, often ornithologists or naturalists, and, in practice, names of people other than the person doing the naming. The White-eared Bronze Cuckoo, *Chrysococcyx meyerii*, was named after Adolf Meyer, a German anthropologist and ornithologist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.
- Names of places, as in *Tangara florida*, the Emerald Tanager.
- Local names, like Hoopoe, an onomatopoeic name based on the bird's call. These common names become part of the scientific name, in this case, the Greek *epops*, in *Upupa epops*.
- Descriptions of the bird's color, shape, or behavior such as *Bicinctus*, twice encircled, or banded, as in *Treron bicinctus*, the Orange-breasted Green Pigeon. The Red-headed Myzomela or Honeyeater, *Myzomela erythrocephala*, is from the Greek, *muzao*, suck in; *meli*, honey, Latin, *erythro*, red, and *cephala*, head.
- Odd appellations, such as *Aerodramus fuciphagus*, from *fuci*, seaweed, and *phagus*, eater of, as in the Edible-nest Swiftlet. The species name derives from a Chinese story of the birds swooping down into the ocean to collect material for their nests, which are made almost exclusively of saliva, not seaweed.



*Tangara florida*,  
Emerald Tanager (p. 78)

On the whole, the scientific—binomial—names of birds are descriptive in one way or another. More importantly, they can definitively designate each particular species of bird in one language that is officially recognized around the world.

One can only imagine the confusion if birds were identified only by their common names. Instead of *Anas platyrhynchos* all over the northern hemisphere, we'd have Mallard, Canard Colvert, Anade Real, Stokente, Wilde End, Germano Reale, Stokkand, Ma-gamo, Pato-real, and others. Clearly unworkable. So scientific names are valuable, although common names are used most often by birdwatchers.

But since common bird names have caused confusion in the past, the American Ornithologists' Union and British Ornithologists' Union have made some common English names for American and British birds official.

As in all science, continually gathered new information changes taxonomic relationships, and the scientific and common names along with them. So, although we tried to include the most current and accurate scientific names, based on the International Ornithologists' Union's IOC World Bird List, there is no guarantee that they will be accurate tomorrow.

# LATIN FOR BIRD LOVERS

As in every scientific discipline and related endeavors, words derived from the Latin form the core language of the discipline, although derivations from Greek and shared Indo-European roots figure strongly as well. Ornithology and bird-watching are perfect examples. The scientific names of birds define the relationships among some 10,000 species and are typically descriptive. The genus and species name may describe the birds' color, pattern, size, or parts of the body; the name of an ornithologist or other person; where it is found; its behavior; or some characteristic that may not make sense now but did in the eye of the person who named it. In any case, it is often interesting. For example, *Falco mexicanus*, the scientific name of the Prairie Falcon, obviously means a falcon from Mexico. Less obvious, perhaps, is *Anas acuta*, the Northern Pintail, whose scientific name means "sharp duck," referring to the male bird's tail.

Bird enthusiasts don't often pay much attention to scientific names, but bird feather anatomy such as "superciliary" and "auricular" are crucial to identifica-

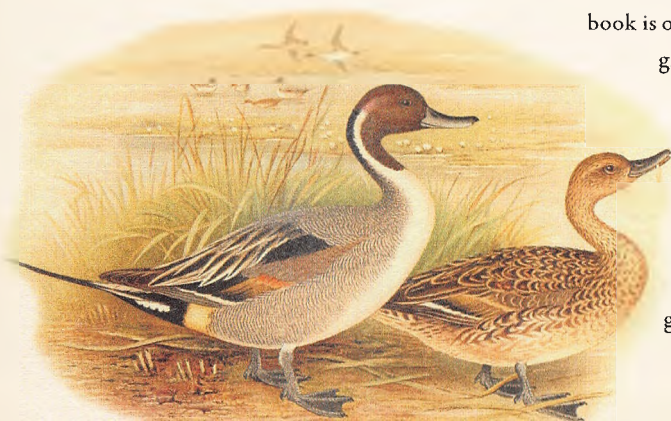
tion, as is "furcula" to those banding (or ringing) birds and estimating fat stores on the birds. "Pelagic" is a term not known to most people but often used by ocean-going birders.

We hope this book will open your mind to some scientific and everyday terms that have derived from the Latin and make your bird-watching activities all the more fascinating.

Biological classification is based on the work of Carl Linnaeus, who grouped species on the basis of shared physical characteristics. Darwin's classifications based on evolutionary descent increased the consistency of classification. Now, phylogenetic groupings created by taxonomy and DNA data in addition to morphology are used. Interestingly, these new methods have corroborated much of the anatomical and morphological classifications.

The major taxonomical classifications are class, order, family, genus, and species. Birds belong to the Class Aves and are grouped into 27 orders, all of which end in -iformes, such as Passeriformes (songbirds) and Gaviiformes (loons or divers). Each order contains one or more family, ending in -idae, such as Paridae (titmice). The focus of this book is on the genus and species, the most specific groupings. The genus is always capitalized and italicized; the species is always lower case and italicized; e.g. *Passer domesticus*, the House Sparrow. While taxonomists in all biological fields disagree to some degree about classifications schemes, those in ornithology generally agree.

*Anas acuta*,  
Northern Pintail (p. 17)







*Gavia immer*,  
Great Northern Loon or Diver (p. 85)

Because of the loon's eerie call, the name has come to mean crazy and is mistakenly associated with our lunar satellite.

Pronunciation of the names in this book is based on New Latin, the form that developed after the Renaissance (around 1500) for scientific nomenclature, particularly Greco-Latin taxonomic nomenclature of biology.

Unlike classical Latin, New Latin varies from region to region, country to country, and there is no international agreement about how scientific names should be pronounced. Since this book is in English, we are using that language to shape our pronunciations. Our main goal is to give you a workable pronunciation that is true to the etymology of the term—both Greek and Latin. In addition, we are using English pronunciations of places to determine the best management of vowels, consonants, and accents.

Beyond the regional differences in the pronunciation of scientific names, New Latin differs from classical Latin in its handling of vowels, consonants, and accents. For example, there is no *th*-sound in classical Latin; it is, however, generally used in New Latin but only in its unvoiced form, as in theater. The only exception to this rule is in proper names, such as a person's name (Thomas) or a place name (River Thames). Many birds are named after people, usually not the person doing the naming. These names are "Latinized" to create the binomial.

For example, Audubon named a wren after English ornithologist Thomas Bewick. This bird's common English name is Bewick's Wren, but the Latin name is *Thryomanes bewickii* (Greek, *thruon*, reed, and *manes*, very fond of) to describe the preferred habitat of the bird. Bewick's name becomes *Bewickii*, *-ii* to show possession, giving us a pronunciation of *be-WIK-ee-eye*. While the accent is generally put where it exists in the language of the name, the Latin possessive form sometimes shifts that accent and accounts for some of the variations in pronunciation between regions and countries.

*Passer ammodendri*,  
Saxaul Sparrow (p. 166)

The songbirds, order Passeriformes, comprise the largest taxonomic group of birds, containing about 52 percent of all bird species.





*Hylonympha macrocerca*,  
Scissor-tailed Hummingbird (p. 108)



# AN INTRODUCTION TO THE A-Z LISTINGS

This book is intended to be an interesting and enjoyable jaunt into the world of scientific bird names. It is not definitive. That would take a much bigger book and a much greater interest in the derivation of names. The *Helm Dictionary of Scientific Bird Names* by James Jobling is the closest to a definitive source of bird names (about 20,000 of them on 432 pages) that we have found; we used the International Ornithologists' Union's IOC World Bird List as the final arbiter on the accuracy of common and scientific bird names.

Here follows, in alphabetical order, over 3,000 scientific names of birds, either a genus or species. The term appears first, then a guide to the pronunciation from New or Scientific Latin, followed by the definition of the term, or its parts. An example of a scientific name of which the word is a part is also given. For example:

*Caeruleirostris* see-roo-lee-eye-ROSS-tris  
*Caerul*, blue, and *rostris*, bill or beak, as in *Loxops caeruleirostris*, the Akekee, a honeycreeper with a blue bill

In this example, the words are Latin derived and the two parts of *caeruleirostris* are defined. As added clarification, as the common name is not helpful, it is noted as a honeycreeper with a blue bill. Most of the scientific names have clear meanings, although why they were chosen for a particular bird may sometimes not be clear. In the interest of space, explanations of why a bird was given a particular scientific name are provided only where we think the reader's curiosity might be piqued.

For simplicity, not all the alternative endings, genders, or cases of each term are listed, as the definitions of words like *leptoptila* and *leptotilos* are essentially identical (*lepto*, thin, slender, and *ptilo*, wing).

The language of derivation of the scientific name is noted if it is other than Latin. If no language is noted, it is from the Latin. It is worth noting again that Latin (including Classical, Modern, Scientific, Late, Medieval, Renaissance) and Greek evolved from shared Indo-European roots, producing significant overlap in etymology. Therefore, as often as possible, we have used the Latin spellings and pronunciations because they comprise the main basis for New (scientific) Latin. We have also chosen the most applicable explanation to elucidate the naming of birds.



*Loxops caeruleirostris*  
Akekee, a honeycreeper (p. 39)



## A

Aalge *AL-jee*

Type of auk, from the Danish, as in *Uria aalge*, the Common Murre or Guillemot

Abbotti *AB-bot-tye*

After William Louis Abbott, American doctor and naturalist, as in *Papasula abbotti*, Abbott's Booby

Abeillei *a-BEL-eye*

After M. Abeille, French collector and naturalist, as in *Icterus abeillei*, the Black-backed Oriole

Aberrans *AB-ber-ranz*

Unusual, different, as in *Cisticola aberrans*, the Lazy Cisticola; denotes use of an unusual habitat for this group of birds

Aberti *AL-bert-eye*

After American ornithologist James William Abert, as in *Melospiza aberti*, Abert's Towhee

Abnormis *ab-NOR-mis*

*Ab*, away, and *normis*, usual; so, abnormal, as in *Sasia abnormis*, a very small woodpecker, the Rufous Piculet

*Sasia abnormis*,  
Rufous Piculet

Abroscopus *a-bro-SKO-pus*

Greek, *abro*, delicate, dainty, and *skopus*, sentry, guard or goal, as in *Abroscopus superciliosus*, the Yellow-bellied Warbler

Aburria *a-BUR-ree-a*

From *abhorre*, to abhor, not inclined to, bored, as in *Aburria aburri*, the Wattled Guan; applied to the bird for its habit of resting for the better part of a day

Abyssinicus, -a *a-bis-SINK-us/a*

After East Africa, specifically Abyssinia, now Ethiopia, as in *Asio abyssinicus*, the Abyssinian, or African Long-eared, Owl

Acadicus *a-KAD-ib-kus*

After Acadia, a region in Canada, as in *Aegolius* (owl) *acadicus*, the Northern Saw-whet Owl

Acanthagenys *a-kan-tha-JEN-is*

Greek, *akanthos*, from *ake*, point, thorn, and *genys*, jaw, as in *Acanthagenys rufogularis*, the Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater

Acanthis *a-KAN-this*

Greek, *akanthos*, from *ake*, point, thorn; Zeus and Apollo changed Acanthus into a finch after Acanthus was killed by his father's horse, as in *Acanthis flammea* (red flag), the Common Redpoll

Acanthiza *a-kan-THY-za*

Greek, *akanthos*, from *ake*, point, thorn, and *zo*, to live, as in *Acanthiza inornata*, the Western Thornbill

Acanthorhynchus *a-kan-tho-RINK-us*

Greek, *akanthos*, from *ake*, point, thorn, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Acanthorhynchus superciliosus*, the Western Spinebill

Acanthornis *a-kan-THOR-nis*

Greek, *akanthos*, from *ake*, point, thorn, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Acanthornis magna*, the Scrubtit

Accipiter *ak-SIP-ib-ter*

To take, grasp, receive. A group of predatory birds, forest dwelling and diurnal, such as the *Accipiter gentilis*, Northern Goshawk

Aceros *a-SER-os*

Greek, *a*, without, and *ceros*, horn, as in *Aceros corrugatus*, the Wrinkled Hornbill

Acridotheres *a-kri-do-THER-eez*

Greek, *akridis*, locust, and *therao*, hunt, as in *Acridotheres tristis*, the Common Myna

**Acrobatornis** *a-kro-ba-TOR-nis*

Greek, *acrobat*, gymnastic performer, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Acrobatornis fonscae* (hunter), the Pink-legged Graveteiro, an acrobatic bird that can hang upside down while foraging

**Acrocephalus** *a-kro-se-FAL-us*

*Acro*, acrobatic and *cephala*, head, as in *Acrocephalus agricola*, the Paddyfield Warbler

**Actenoides** *ak-ten-OY-deez*

Greek, *aktis*, ray or beam, and *oides*, resembling, as in *Actenoides concretus*, the Rufous-collared Kingfisher

**Actinodura** *ak-tin-o-DOO-ra*

Greek, *aktis*, ray or beam, and *oura*, tail, as in *Actinodura egertoni*, the Rusty-fronted Barwing, with a pointed tail

**Actitis** *ak-TY-tis*

Greek, coast dweller, as in *Actitis macularius*, the Spotted Sandpiper

**Actophilornis** *ak-to-fil-OR-nis*

Greek, *aktis*, ray or beam, *philos*, like or love, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Actophilornis africanus*, the African Jacana; means sun-loving bird

**Acuminata** *a-koo-min-AH-ta*

Sharp or tapering, as in *Calidris acuminata*, the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper

**Acuta** *A-KOO-ta*

Sharp, as in *Anas acuta*, to describe the pointed tail of the Northern Pintail

**Acutipennis** *a-koo-tih-PEN-nis*

*Acuta*, sharp, and *penna*, feather, as in *Chordeiles acutipennis*, the Lesser Nighthawk

**Adelberti** *a-DEL-bert-eye*

After Adelbert Fényes de Csakaly, a noted physician, entomologist, and ornithologist, as in *Chalcomitra adelberti*, the Buff-throated Sunbird

**Adorabilis** *a-do-RA-bil-is*

*Adoro*, rever, honor, worship, adore, as in *Lophornis adorabilis*, the White-crested Coquette

**Adscitus** *ad-SHE-tus*

Adopt, approve, as in *Platycercus adscitus*, the Pale-headed Rosella. Named and renamed in the late 1700s, the etymology of the species name is unknown



*Actenoides concretus*,  
Rufous-collared Kingfisher

**Adsimilis** *ad-SIM-il-is*

Similar, close, as in *Dicrurus adsimilis*, the Fork-tailed Drongo; the namer thought the drongo looked like a common bird of the UK

**Aechmophorus** *ek-mo-FOR-us*

Greek, *aikhme*, spear, and *phero*, bearing, as in *Aechmophorus occidentalis*, the Western Grebe; named for its spear-like bill

**Aedon** *EE-don*

In Greek mythology, after Aedon, wife of Zethus, who was turned into a bird by Zeus, as in *Troglodytes aedon*, the House Wren

**Aegithalos** *ee-ji-THAL-os*

Greek for tit, a small bird, as in *Aegithalos fuliginosis*, the Sooty Bushtit; tit from Norwegian *titr*, small bird

**Aegotheles** *ee-go-THEL-eez*

Greek, *aego*, goat, and *theles*, suck, suckle, as in *Aegotheles insignis*, the Feline Owllet-nightjar; members of this family are called "goatsuckers"

**Aegyptius** *ee-JIP-pee-us*

Greek, *aigupios*, vulture, as in *Aegyptius monachus*, the Cinereous or Black Vulture

**Aeneus** *ee-NEE-us*

Brassy or gold in color, as in *Dicrurus aeneus*, the Bronzed Drongo

**Aenigma** *ee-NIG-ma*

Riddle, as in *Sapaya aenigma*, the Sapaya

**Aepypodius** *ee-pi-PO-dee-us*

Greek, *aipus*, tall, high, and *pous*, foot, as in *Aepypodius bruijnii*, the Waigeo Brushturkey

**Aequatorialis** *ee-kwa-tor-ee-AL-is*

Equatorial, as in *Momotus aequatorialis*, the Andean Motmot

**Aerodramus** *eh-ro-DRA-mus*

Greek, *aer*, air, and *dram*, to run, as in *Aerodramus elaphrus*, the Seychelles Swiftlet

**Aestiva, -alis** *es-TEE-va/es-tee-VAL-is*

Summer, as in *Peucaea aestivalis*, Bachman's Sparrow and *Amazona aestiva*, the Turquoise-fronted Amazon

**Aethereus** *ee-THER-ee-us*

Greek, *aithrios*, ethereal, as in *Phaethon aethereus*, the Red-billed Tropicbird

**Afer** *AH-fer*

Used by ancient Romans to refer to what is now Tunisia, as in *Euplectes afer*, the Yellow-crowned Bishop

**Affinis** *af-FIN-is*

Affinity, similarity, as in *Aythya affinis*, the Lesser Scaup, which is closely related and virtually identical to the Greater Scaup, *Aythya marila*. *Affinis* is the specific epithet of dozens of bird species

**Agapornis** *a-ga-POR-nis*

Greek, *agape*, love or affection, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Agapornis fischeri*, Fischer's Lovebird

**Agelaioides** *a-jel-eye-OY-deez*

Greek, *agelaius*, gregarious, and *oides*, resembling, as in *Agelaioides badius*, the Baywing

**Agelaius** *a-je-LE-us*

Greek, gregarious, as in *Agelaius tricolor*, the Tricolored Blackbird, a colonial nesting species that also winters in large flocks

**Agilis** *a-JIL-is*

Agile, nimble, quick, as in *Oporornis agilis*, the Connecticut Warbler

**Aglaiae** *a-GLAY-ee*

*Agali*, brilliant, splendid, as in *Pachyrhamphus aglaiae*, the Rose-throated Becard

**Agricola** *a-GRI-ko-la*

*Ager*, field, and *cola*, inhabitant, as in *Acrocephalus agricola*, the Paddyfield Warbler

**Agriornis** *ah-gree-OR-nis*

*Agri*, agriculture, and Greek, *ornis*, bird, as in *Agriornis micropterus*, the Gray-bellied Shrike-Tyrant

**Ailuroedus** *eye-loo-ROY-dus*

Greek, *ailur*, cat, and *oidos*, singing, as in *Ailuroedus melanotis*, the Spotted Catbird

**Aimophila** *eye-mo-FIL-a*

Greek, *aimos*, thicket, and *philos*, to like, as in *Aimophila ruficeps*, the Rufous-crowned Sparrow

**Aix** *EYKS*

Greek, waterfowl, as in *Aix sponsa*, the Wood Duck

**Ajaja** *a-JA-ja*

Finnish, to drive, ride, or chase, as in *Platalea ajaja*, the Roseate Spoonbill (see box)

*Aix sponsa*,  
Wood Duck





**Alauda** *a-LAW-da*

Celtic, great song, as in *Alauda arvensis*, the Eurasian Skylark, noted for its sustained singing while on the wing

**Alba**, -i, -o *AL-ba/beye/bo*

White, as in *Motacilla alba*, the White or Pied Wagtail

**Albatrus** *al-BAT-rus*

Probably derived from Portuguese *alcatraz*, pelican, *gha*, a kind of sea eagle, as in *Phoebastria albatrus*, the Short-tailed Albatross

**Albellus** *al-BEL-lus*

Diminutive of *alba*, as in *Mergellus albellus*, the Smew, a small duck related to the mergansers

**Alberti** *AL-bert-eye*

After Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, as in *Crax alberti*, the Blue-billed Curassow

**Albescens** *AL-bes-sens*

*Albus*, white and *-escens*, becoming, as in *Calendula alba albescens*, the Karoo Lark

**Albicapillus**, -a *al-bi-ka-PIL-lus/a*

*Albus*, white, and *capillus*, hair, as in *Lamprolornis albicapillus*, the White-crowned Starling

**Albicaudatus**, -a *al-bi-kaw-DA-tus/ta*

*Albus*, white, and *cauda*, tail of an animal, as in *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*, the White-tailed Hawk

**Albiceps** *AL-bi-seps*

*Albus*, white, and *ceps*, head, as in *Vanellus albiceps*, the White-crowned Lapwing

**Albicilla** *al-bi-SIL-la*

*Albus*, white, and *cilla*, tail, as in *Haliaeetus albicilla*, the White-tailed Eagle

**Albicollis** *al-bi-KOL-lis*

*Albus*, white, and *collis*, throat or collar, as in *Corvus albicollis*, the White-necked Raven

**Albidinucha** *al-bi-di-NOO-ka*

*Albus*, white, *idus*, having the nature of, and *nucha*, nape, as in *Lorius albidinucha*, the White-naped Lory

**Albifacies** *al-bi-FACE-ez*

*Albus*, white, and *facies*, face, as in *Geotrygon albifacies*, the White-faced Quail-Dove

## LATIN IN ACTION

The Roseate Spoonbill, *Platalea ajaja*, derives its scientific name from its feeding habits. It is found in shallow coastal waters of the southeastern US, where it walks with its spoon-shaped bill in the water and mud, driving prey in front of it, snatching frogs, crabs, fish, worms, crayfish, and other such creatures. In the process of swallowing their prey, the birds also ingest microorganisms with reddish pigments that give the birds their pink color. This behavior and resulting coloring resembles that of the flamingos. Young nestling spoonbills, fed by their parents via regurgitation, have ordinary-shaped bills that gradually become spoon-shaped over a period of several months.

*Platalea ajaja*,  
Roseate Spoonbill

**Albifrons** *AL-bi-fronz*

*Albus*, white, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Amazona albifrons*, the White-fronted Amazon

**Albigula** *al-bi-GOO-la*

*Albus*, white, and *gula*, gullet as in *Buteo albigula*, the White-throated Hawk

**Albilatera** *al-bi-la-TER-ra*

*Albus*, white, and *latera*, side, as in *Diglossa albilatera*, the White-sided Flowerpiercer

**Albipectus** *al-bi-PEK-tus*

*Albus*, white, and *pectus*, chest, as in *Pyrrhura albipectus*, the White-breasted Parakeet



# JOHN GOULD

(1804–1881)

John Gould was born in Dorset, England. His father, a gardener at Windsor Castle, taught him the skills of his trade and Gould eventually secured a position as a gardener at Ripley Castle in Yorkshire. He received little formal education but eventually came to be considered the Father of Australian Ornithology. He was as well known in Europe as Audubon was in America.

Gould also developed skills as a taxidermist and established a taxidermy business in London which stood him in good stead as he built his career as an ornithologist. His contacts with scientists and natural historians led to his obtaining a position as the first curator and preserver of the Zoological Society museum in London.

As curator, Gould had access to all the specimens given to, or collected for, the society. In 1830 he received a collection of birds from the Himalayas, many of which were new to Europe, and turned it into a book, *A Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains*, with his new wife Elizabeth doing many of the illustrations. Over the next few years Gould wrote four bird books, one a five-volume *Birds of Europe*, with beautiful lithographs by Edward Lear. From the age of 20 to 26, Lear created 80 bird portraits for Gould. Many people consider them to be the world's finest ornithological illustrations of the time. Unfortunately, they were mixed in Gould's books with less accomplished work by other artists.

In 1837 Gould met Charles Darwin. Darwin had just returned from the Galapagos and his bird specimens were given to Gould to identify. He realized that the birds Darwin thought were separate species were actually varieties of the same species adapted to the conditions on individual islands. Gould's analysis led to an important step in Darwin's thinking on what became his theory of evolution by natural selection. Gould's work on the birds was included in *Zoology of the Voyage of the H.M.S. Beagle*, and published between 1838 and 1842 with Darwin as editor.

In 1838 Gould and his wife sailed to Australia, wanting to be the first to compile a book on the avifauna of the country. Returning to England in



*Dendrocitta vagabunda*,  
Rufous Treepie

The Rufous Treepie, like other members of the crow family Corvidae, is omnivorous and has adapted to a variety of habitats.

1840, Gould produced *The Birds of Australia*, consisting of 600 illustrations in seven volumes and describing over 300 new bird species. After his wife died in childbirth in 1841, Gould went on to publish *A Monograph of the Trochilidae or Humming Birds* (1849–61), *The Mammals of Australia* (1845–63), *Handbook to the Birds of Australia* (1865), *The Birds of Asia* (1850–83), *The Birds of Great Britain* (1862–73), and *The Birds of New Guinea and the Adjacent Papuan Islands* (1875–88). He was certainly the most prolific ornithological author of his time, producing 41 publications on birds, containing almost 3,000 illustrations created by his wife and others. He was also a superb painter, creating prints that were in great demand.

Some researchers think that Gould himself did the original sketches for all the plates and that Elizabeth Gould, Edward Lear, and others did the hand coloring and lithography. While Gould was not the illustrator of his books, he was skilled in producing quick sketches of dead birds in the field from which the artists created finished pieces. The results were beautiful books and works of art in every detail. For example, he captured the iridescence of hummingbirds by applying gold leaf under the watercolors.

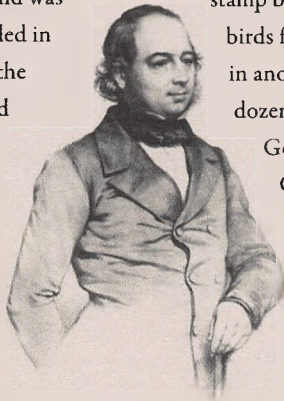


*Campylopterus largipennis*,  
Gray-breasted Sabrewing

For much of his professional career Gould was fascinated by hummingbirds and managed to accumulate a collection of 320 species. In 1851 he displayed this collection at the Great Exhibition in London, a precursor to World's Fairs. In spite of his fascination he had never observed a live hummingbird until he traveled to the US in 1857 and saw a Ruby-throated Hummingbird in Bartram's Gardens in Philadelphia. He captured a few and tried to bring them back alive to England, but needing special care, they lasted only a few weeks.

In 1909 the Gould League of Bird Lovers was founded in Victoria, Australia, to promote environmental education; today it continues to be very active throughout the country. In 1976 the Australian Post honored him with a postage stamp bearing his portrait. In 2009, a series of birds from his *Birds of Australia* was featured in another set of stamps. Also, at least two dozen birds have been named after Gould:

Gould's Petrel, Gould's Bronze Cuckoo, Gould's Frogmouth, Gould's Parrotbill, Gould's Sunbird, and the Gouldian Finch, for example.



*John Gould, The Birds of Great Britain (1873)*

"Man's constant companions in every outdoor occupation, cheering him with their presence and their songs, and often affording him a principal means of subsistence, it is little wonder that the habits and instincts of birds should be a favourite one with most persons..."

**Albipennis** *al-bi-PEN-nis*

*Albus*, white, and *pennis*, tail or quill, as in *Petrophassa albipennis*, the White-quilled Rock Pigeon

**Albogularis** *al-bo-goo-LAR-is*

*Albus*, white, and *gula*, throat, as in *Phalcoboenus albogularis*, the White-throated Caracara

**Albolarvatus** *al-bo-lar-VA-tus*

*Albus*, white, and *laryare*, bewitch/enchant, as in *Picoides albolarvatus*, the White-headed Woodpecker; of 22 species of woodpeckers in North America, this is the only one with a white head, making it particularly unusual and captivating

**Albonotatus** *al-bo-no-TA-tus*

*Albus*, white, and *notatus*, marked, as in *Buteo albonotatus*, the Zone-tailed Hawk

**Albus** *AL-bus*

White, as in *Chionis albus*, the Snowy Sheathbill

**Alca** *AL-ka*

From Icelandic or Norwegian, *auk*, as in *Alca torda*, the Razorbill

**Alcedo** *al-SEE-doe*

Kingfisher, as in *Alcedo atthis*, the Common Kingfisher. "Kingfisher" refers to the excellent fishing skills of riparian species

**Aleadryas** *al-ee-a-DRY-as*

*Alea*, game, and *dryas*, wood-nymph, as in *Aleadryas rufinucha*, the Rufous-naped Whistler

**Alectoris** *a-lek-TOR-is*

Greek *alektoris*, cock, as in *Alectoris graeca*, Rock Partridge

**Aleuticus** *a-LOY-ti-kus*

After the Aleutian Islands, as in *Onychoprion aleuticus*, the Aleutian Tern

*Eremophila alpestris*,  
Horned or Shore Lark

**Alexandrae** *a-lex-AN-dree*

After Alexandra of Denmark, Queen of the United Kingdom and Empress of India and the wife of King Edward VII, as in *Polytelis alexandrae*, Princess Parrot

**Alexandrinus** *a-lek-zan-DRY-nu*

After Alexandria (Egypt), as in *Charadrius alexandrinus*, the Kentish Plover

**Alle** *AL-le*

Norse, small, as in *Alle alle*, the Little Auk

**Allenia** *AL-len-ee-a*

After Joel Allen, American ornithologist, as in *Allenia fusca*, the Scaly-breasted Thrasher

**Alopex** *AL-o-pecks*

Greek, fox, a cunning person, as in *Falco alopex*, the Fox Kestrel

**Alopochen** *al-o-PO-ken*

Greek, *alopex*, fox, and *chen*, goose, as in *Alopochen aegyptiaca*, the Egyptian Goose

**Alpestris** *al-PES-tris*

Of high mountains; the Horned or Shore Lark's name *Eremophila alpestris* means "love of lonely places in the mountains"

**Alphonsionis** *al-fon-see-OWN-is*

After Alphonse Milne-Edwards, a French physician and ornithologist, as in *Sinosuthora alphonsiana*, the Ashy-throated Parrotbill

**Alpina** *al-PINE-a*

Alpine, as in *Calidris alpina*, the Dunlin

**Altiloquus** *al-ti-LOW-kwus*

*Altus*, high, and *loquus*, voice, as in *Vireo altiloquus*, the Black-whiskered Vireo

**Altirostris** *al-ti-ROSS-tris*

*Altus*, tall, deep, and *rostris*, bill or beak, as in *Turdoides altirostris*, the Iraq Babbler

**Amazilia, -zonía** *a-ma-ZIL-ee-a/a-ma-ZON-ee-a*

After the Amazon region, as in *Amazilia lactea*, the Sapphire-spangled Emerald (hummingbird)

**Amblyornis** *am-blee-OR-nis*

Greek, *amblyus*, blunt, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Amblyornis flavifrons*, the Golden-fronted Bowerbird. Compared with other genera of Bowerbirds, *Amblyornis* species are rather dull colored



# AMAZONA

About 30 parrot species native to the New World and distributed from the Caribbean to South America are of the *Amazona* (am-a-ZONE-a) genus. They are well known around the world for their ability to mimic human voices, to manipulate objects with their feet, and to adjust to captivity, making them in demand as domestic pets. There are over 11 million pet birds in the US, 75 percent of them some kind of parrot. Because the *Amazona* species are among the most popular, there has been a significant decline in many of these species' populations, both through the legal and illegal pet trade. Over 60 percent of parrots caught in the wild for the pet trade die before they reach market.

Their desirability is understandable as their personalities and colors are very appealing, but the habits of wild parrots are not well known. They are difficult to catch as they inhabit the canopy of tall trees and frustrate researchers by sitting there for long periods of time. If they are caught and banded/ringed, they pry off the band/ring with their strong beaks.

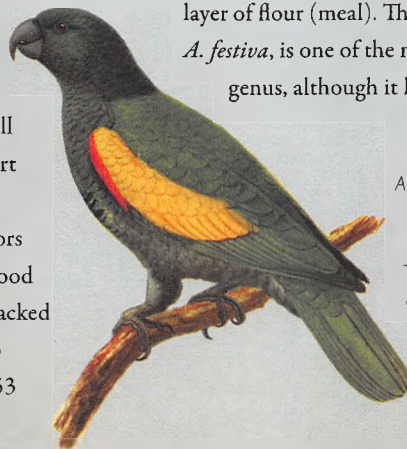
Parrots typically eat nuts, fruit, nectar, and occasionally insects or other arthropods. Their zygodactyl feet (the second and third toes are forward while the first and fourth face rearward) are adapted for grasping food objects and their jaws are made for opening the hardest nuts and fruits. The upper jaw is hinged at the skull and curved downward, allowing it to exert considerable pressure against the sharp edges of the flat lower jaw. Touch receptors in the bill allow the bird to manipulate food items to the proper position for being cracked open. To open a Brazil nut the bill has to exert 1,400 pounds per square inch (9,653



*Amazona festiva*,  
Festive Amazon or Parrot

kilopascals); this is far more force than it would take to break your finger!

There are a number of interesting names in the *Amazona* genus. *A. farinosa* (from the Latin *farina*, flour) is called the Mealy Amazon or Parrot because its back and nape appear to have been covered with a layer of flour (meal). The Festive Amazon or Parrot, *A. festiva*, is one of the most festively colored of the genus, although it has a lot of competition.



*Amazona violacea*,  
Guadeloupe Parrot

The Guadeloupe Parrot became extinct in the late eighteenth century but a description of it indicates that the head, neck, and upper thorax were violet colored.



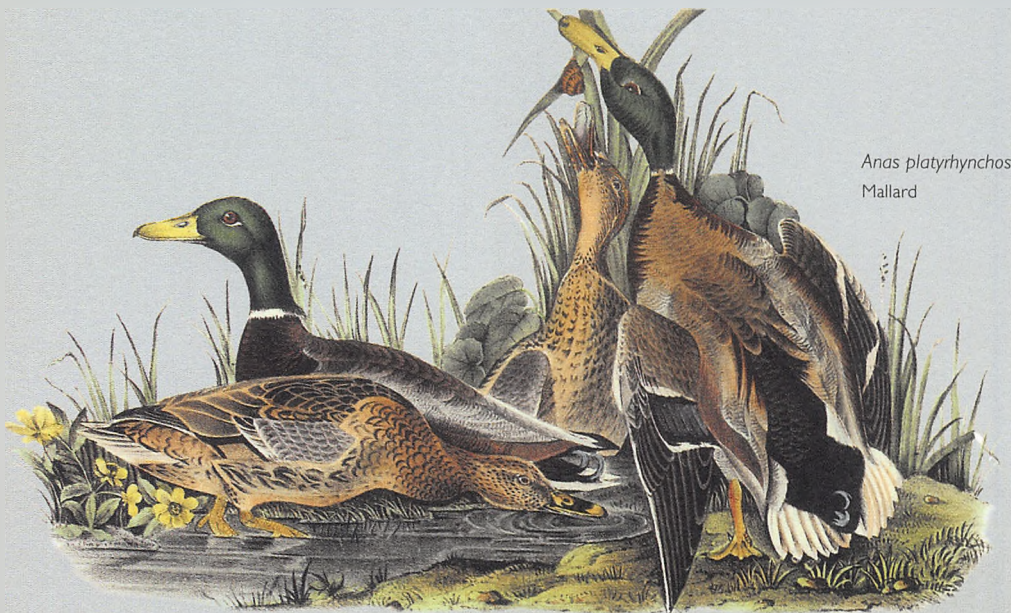
# ANAS

The Latin for duck is *Anas* (*AN-as*). This genus of waterfowl encompasses about 45 species in the subfamily Anatinae, known as the dabbling ducks for their habit of tipping their heads down and their tails up while feeding on the water. These are ducks like mallards, wigeons, teals, pintails, and shovelers. The most well-known of this genus is certainly the Mallard, *A. platyrhynchos* (Greek, *platys*, broad, and *rhynchos*, bill), with its wide, flat bill; Mallards are found naturally almost everywhere in the temperate and subtropical northern hemisphere and have been introduced elsewhere. With their long, rounded, relatively flat bills with a hook-like nail at the end, dabbling ducks are well adapted for dipping from the surface and searching for food on the bottoms of shallow waters. Inside the edges of the bill are lamellae, comb-like structures that serve as sieves. A mouthful of mud and water is taken in the mouth and filtered for food items like insects and seeds. The especially wide bill that gives the Northern

Shoveler its name, *A. clypeata* (Latin *clypeatus*, shield-bearing), may have over 200 lamellae.

Ducks, from the Old English *ducan*, to duck or dive, comprise perhaps the most recognizable group of birds. Ducks are waterfowl, like geese and swans, but unlike the others, they are sexually dimorphic, the males being much more colorful than the females, and for good reason. On the wintering grounds, the male, in his showy courtship plumage, attracts a drab female; they pair up and migrate to their breeding grounds, where the female excavates a depression in the ground and lines it with nearby grasses. She will lay anywhere from one to a dozen eggs or more and start incubation only after they are all laid, so they all hatch at once and follow the mother around to learn duck survival skills. Her drab plumage serves her well as camouflage during this process.

An interesting urban myth about ducks is that their quack does not produce an echo. Ridiculous on the face of it, this belief has been disproven in the lab.



*Anas platyrhynchos*,  
Mallard

## Americana a-mer-i-KAN-a

Of America, as in *Recurvirostra americana*, the American Avocet

## Ammodramus am-mo-DRA-mus

Greek, *ammos*, sand, and *dramos*, to run, as in *Ammodramus savannarum*, the Grasshopper Sparrow

## Amoena, -us a-MOY-na/nus

Lovely, beautiful, as in *Passerina amoena*, Lazuli Bunting

## Ampeliceps am-PEL-ib-seps

*Ampelos*, coiling like a vine, and *ceps*, headed, as in *Ampeliceps coronatus*, the Golden-crested Myna

## Amphispiza am-fi-SPY-za

Greek, *amphi*, having two alternates, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Amphispiza bilineata*, the Black-throated Sparrow, originally considered a finch

## Anas AN-as

Greek, duck, as in *Anas platyrhynchos*, the Mallard

## Anhinga an-HIN-ga

From Tupi Indian (Brazil) language, as in *Anhinga anhinga*, the Anhinga

## Anisognathus an-ih-sog-NA-thus

Greek, *aniso*, unequal, and *gnathos*, jaw, as in *Anisognathus notabilis*, the Black-chinned Mountain Tanager

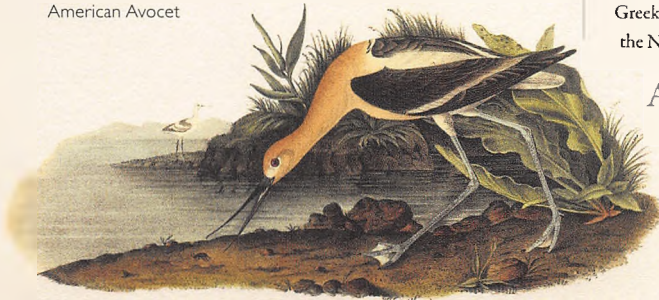
## Anna AN-na

After Princess Anna d'Essling, Duchess of Rivoli, as in *Calypte anna*, Anna's Hummingbird

## Anomalospiza an-om-o-lo-SPY-za

Greek, *anomalos*, odd, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Anomalospiza imberbis*, the Cuckoo-finch

*Recurvirostra americana*,  
American Avocet



*Calypte anna*,  
Anna's Hummingbird

## Anous AH-noos

Greek, silly, stupid, as in *Anous stolidus*, the Brown Noddy, which shows little fear of humans

## Anser AN-ser

Goose, as in *Anser anser*, the Greylag Goose

## Anthobaphes an-tho-BAF-eez

Greek, *anthos*, flower, *baph*, dye, dip, as in *Anthobaphes violacea*, the Orange-breasted Sunbird

## Anthocephala an-tho-se-FAL-a

Greek, *anthos*, flower, Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Anthocephala floriceps*, the Blossomcrown, a type of hummingbird

## Anthonyi an-THONE-ee-eye

After Alfred W. Anthony, American bird collector and ornithologist, as in *Nyctidromus anthonyi*, Anthony's Nightjar

## Anthornis an-THOR-nis

Greek, *anthos*, flower, *ornis*, bird, as in *Anthornis melanura*, the New Zealand Bellbird

## Anthoscopus an-tho-SKO-pus

Greek, *anthos*, flower, *skopos*, seeker, as in *Anthoscopus caroli*, the Gray Penduline Tit

## Anthracinus An-thra-SYE-nus

Coal black, as in *Buteogallus anthracinus*, the Common Black Hawk



## Anthus *AN-thus*

Greek, flower, as in *Anthus rubescens* (fresh, reddish), the Buff-bellied Pipit, pipit meaning to chirp. Name perhaps based upon the flower-colored Western Yellow Wagtail, *Motacilla flava*, a member of the same family as the pipit

## Antiquus *an-TI-kwuss*

Old, as in *Synthliboramphus antiquus*, the Ancient Murrelet

## Aphelocoma *a-fe-lo-KO-ma*

Greek, *apheles*, smooth, and *kome*, hair, as in *Aphelocoma coerulescens*, the Florida Scrub Jay

## Apicalis *a-pi-KA-lis*

Tipped, referring to the tail, as in *Moho apicalis*, the extinct Oahu Oo

## Aquaticus *a-KWAT-ib-kus*

Aquatic, as in *Rallus aquaticus*, the Water Rail

## Aquila *a-KWIL-a*

Eagle, as in *Aquila nipalensis*, the Steppe Eagle

## Arachnothera *a-rak-no-THER-a*

Greek, *arachno*, spider, and *thera*, hunt, as in *Arachnothera chrysogenys*, the Yellow-eared Spiderhunter

## Arborea *ar-BOR-ee-a*

Tree, as in *Spizella arborea*, the American Tree Sparrow

## Archboldia *arch-BOLD-ee-a*

After Richard Archbold, zoologist at the American Museum of Natural History, as in *Archboldia papuensis*, Archbold's Bowerbird

## Archeopteryx *ar-kee-OP-ter-iks*

Greek, *Archeo*, ancient, and *pteryx*, wing, as in *Archeopteryx lithographica*, "ancient wing," often considered the "first bird"

## Archilochus *ar-kee-LO-kus*

Greek, *archi*, chief, and *lochos*, ambush, as in *Archilochus colubris*, the Ruby-throated Hummingbird, probably because of the bird's territorial behavior

## Arctica *ARK-ti-ka*

Northern, as in *Gavia arctica*, the Black-throated Loon or Diver

## Arenaria *a-ren-AR-ee-a*

Sand-pit, as in *Arenaria interpres*, the Ruddy Turnstone

*Larus argentatus*,  
European Herring Gull



## Argentatus *ar-jen-TA-tus*

Adorned with silver, as in *Larus argentatus*, the European Herring Gull

## Argus *AR-gus*

Greek, *argos*, the bright one, as in *Argusianus argus*, the Great Argus (pheasant)

## Arquata *ar-KWA-ta*

Curved, bow-shaped, as in *Numenius arquata*, the Eurasian Curlew

## Asio *AH-see-o*

Little horned owl, as in *Asio otus*, the Long-eared Owl

## Assimilis *as-SIM-il-is*

Like, similar, as in *Circus assimilis*, the Spotted Harrier, similar to the Swamp or Marsh Harrier

## Ater *AH-ter*

Black, as in *Daptrius ater*, the Black Caracara and *Molothrus ater*, the Brown-headed Cowbird

## Athene *ah-THEE-nee*

After Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom, as in *Athene noctua*, Little Owl

## Atilla *ah-TIL-la*

From Turkic, original name of Volga River, as in *Atilla rufus*, the Gray-hooded Atilla. Atilla flycatchers are so named because of their aggressive nature, as in Atilla the Hun

## Atra *AT-ra*

Black, as in *Myiagra atra*, the Biak Black Flycatcher

## Atratus *ab-TRA-tus*

*Atra*, black, as in *Coragyps atratus*, the American Black Vulture

# APTERYX

The genus name *Apteryx* (AP-ter-iks) derives from the Greek *a*, without, lacking, and *pteryx*, wing, although the five species in this genus do in fact have wings, albeit very small and almost unnoticeable. These are the kiwis, the common name derived from the Maori name for the call. The species are the Great Spotted, *A. haastii*, and Little Spotted, *A. owenii*, Kiwis, the Okarito, *A. rowi*, Southern Brown, *A. australis*, and North Island Brown, *A. mantelli*, Kiwis. All are restricted to New Zealand, and New Zealanders are often referred to as Kiwis.

Kiwis are ratites, a group of large flightless birds including the Ostrich, Rhea, Emu, and two cassowaries. There are about 40 species of flightless birds in the world, but ratites are a special group because they do not possess a keel (carina) on their sternum. In flying birds the keel anchors the large flight muscles, but ratites have no keel and only poorly developed breast muscles. Ratite, from the Latin *ratiss*, meaning ship, refers to the keel-less sternum that resembles a simple boat. Ratites have no tail, their feathers are primitive with no barbules to hook the barbs together, and there is no preen gland to oil their feathers.

Kiwis are unusual in a number of other ways. They are nocturnal, they have long rictal bristles that serve a tactile function, they probe in the ground with their long bills for worms, and they lay the largest eggs in the world in proportion to their size. About the size of a chicken and weighing 4 to 6 pounds (1.5 to 3.3 kilograms), a kiwi lays an egg that weighs about one quarter of its body weight and is roughly six times the size of the average chicken egg. As you might expect, the female has to eat considerably more than usual during the 30 days the egg is developing.



*Apteryx haastii*,  
Great Spotted Kiwi

Many flightless birds, like the kiwis in New Zealand, evolved on islands with few or no land predators. But with the introduction of cats, weasels, opossums, and the reduction of suitable habitat, populations have declined drastically. Only about 5 percent of kiwi chicks survive in the wild and only in areas where there is some predator control.



*Apteryx australis*,  
Southern Brown Kiwi



## Atricapilla *ah-tri-ka-PIL-la*

*Atra*, black, and *capill*, hair, as in *Sylvia atricapilla*, the Eurasian Blackcap

## Atricilla *a-tri-SIL-la*

*Atra*, black, and *cilla*, tail, as in *Leucophaeus atricilla*, the Laughing Gull

## Atricristatus *a-tri-kris-TA-tus*

*Atra*, black, and *cristatus*, crest, as in *Baeolophus atricristatus*, the Black-crested Titmouse

## Atrogularis *aa-tro-goo-LAR-is*

*Atra*, black, and *gula*, throat, as in *Spizella atrogularis*, the Black-chinned Sparrow

## Audouinii *aw-DWIN-nee-eye*

After Jean Victoire Audouin, French naturalist, as in *Ichthyæus audouinii*, Audouin's Gull

## Augur *AW-ger*

Tell the future, as in *Buteo augur*, the Augur Buzzard; perhaps after the augur, the Roman priest who interpreted the gods' wills by studying birds' flight

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

The Double-crested Cormorant has two tufts of feathers or "crests," but the Latin adjective *auritus*, long-eared, is used to describe the bird. *Auritus* can also mean attentive or nosey, as forward-facing ears on a mammal like a dog suggest. These tufts are not noticeable except during breeding season. Interestingly, the tufts tend to be black in the more southern areas of North America and get whiter as one moves northward. Alaskan birds' tufts are white. This gradual and continuous gradient of tuft color is an example of a cline, from the Greek *klinein*, meaning to lean or incline, and is one way birds recognize other birds from their population.

*Phalacrocorax auritus*,  
Double-crested Cormorant

## Aura *AW-ra*

Breeze, air, as in *Cathartes aura*, the Turkey Vulture

## Auratus *aw-RA-tus*

*Aurata*, golden or gilded, as in *Icterus auratus*, the Orange Oriole

## Auriceps *AW-ri-seps*

*Aurum*, gold, and *ceps*, head, as in *Pharomachus auriceps*, the Golden-headed Quetzal

## Auricularis *aw-ri-koo-LAR-is*

Pertaining to the ear, as in *Myiornis auricularis*, the Eared Pygmy Tyrant

## Aurifrons *AW-ri-fronz*

*Aurum*, gold, and *frons*, front, forehead, as in *Ammodramus aurifrons*, the Yellow-browed Sparrow

## Auritus *aw-RYE-tus*

*Auris*, ear, with ears, as in *Phalacrocorax auritus*, the Double-crested Cormorant (see box)

## Aurocapilla *aw-ro-ka-PIL-a*

*Aurum*, gold, and *capillus*, hair, as in *Seiurus aurocapilla*, the Ovenbird, with a line of orange feathers on the top of the head that can be erected

## Auroreus *aw-ROR-ee-us*

Daybreak, sunrise, as in *Phoenicurus auroreus*, the Daurian Redstart

## Australis *AUS-tra-lis*

After a hypothetical southern continent, *Terra australis incognita*, as in *Acrocephalus australis*, the Australian Reed Warbler

## Axillaris *ak-sil-LAR-is*

*Axil*, under the armpit, and *aris*, referring to, as in *Myrmotherula axillaris*, the White-flanked Antwren

## Ayresii *AIRS-ee-eye*

After Thomas Ayres, British collector and naturalist, as in *Cisticola ayresii*, Wing-snapping Cisticola

## Aythya *eye-THEE-a*

Greek *aithuia*, a water bird, as in *Aythya affinis*, the Lesser Scaup



## B

**Bacchus** *BAK-kus*

Roman god of wine, as in *Ardeola bacchus*, the Chinese Pond Heron, with a head and neck the color of red wine

**Bachmani** *BAK-man-eye*

After John Bachman, minister and naturalist who co-authored *Quadrupeds of North America* with J. J. Audubon, as in *Haematopus bachmani*, the Black Oystercatcher

**Badia** *ba-DEE-a*

Bay-colored, as in *Cecropis badia*, the Rufous-bellied Swallow

**Badius** *BA-dee-us*

Chestnut or bay colored, as in *Ploceus badius*, the Cinnamon Weaver

**Baeolophus** *bee-o-LO-fus*

Greek, *baio*, little, and Latin, *lophus*, crest, as in *Baeolophus bicolor*, the Tufted Titmouse

**Bacopogon** *bee-o-PO-gon*

Greek, *baio*, little, and *pogon*, beard, as in *Bacopogon indicator*, the Honeyguide Greenbul

**Bahamensis** *ba-ha-MEN-sis*

Bahamian; as in *Anas bahamensis*, the White-checked (or Bahama) Pintail

**Baileyi** *BAY-lee-eye*

After Alfred Marshall Bailey, director of the Denver Museum of Natural History, who collected the specimen, as in *Xenospiza baileyi*, Sierra Madre Sparrow

**Bailloni, -ius** *by-LON-eye/ee-us*

After Louis Antoine François Baillon, French naturalist and collector, as in *Baillonius* (now *Pteroglossus*) *bailloni*, the Saffron Toucanet

**Bairdii** *BEAR-dee-eye*

After Spencer Fullerton Baird, naturalist and second secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, as in *Calidris bairdii*, Baird's Sandpiper

**Bakeri** *BAY-ker-eye*

After John Randal Baker, professor at the University of Oxford, as in *Ducula bakeri*, the Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon; also George Fisher Baker, American banker and trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, as in *Sericulus bakeri*, Fire-maned Bowerbird



*Baeolophus bicolor*,  
Tufted Titmouse

**Balaeniceps** *bay-LEEN-ib-seps*

*Balaena*, whale, and *ceps*, head, as in *Balaeniceps rex*, the Shoebill

**Bambusicola** *bam-bus-ib-KO-la*

From *Bambuseae*, the bamboo family, and *cola*, dweller, as in *Bambusicola thoracicus*, the Chinese Bamboo Partridge

**Bangsia** *BANG-see-a*

After Outram Bangs, curator of mammals at the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology, as in *Bangsia arcae*, the Blue-and-gold Tanager

**Banksiana** *bank-see-AN-a*

After Joseph Banks, English botanist and explorer, as in *Neolalage banksiana*, the Buff-bellied Monarch

**Banksii** *BANK-see-eye*

After Joseph Banks, English botanist and explorer, as in *Calyptorhynchus banksii*, the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo

**Bannermani** *BAN-ner-man-eye*

After David Armitage Bannerman, former Chairman of the British Ornithologists' Club, as in *Tauraco bannermani*, Bannerman's Turaco

## Barbarus *bar-BAR-us*

*Barba*, beard, as in *Megascops barbarus*, the Bearded Screech Owl

## Barbatus *bar-BA-tus*

*Barba*, beard, as in *Gypaetus barbatus*, the Bearded Vulture

## Barbistrostris *bar-bi-ROSS-tris*

*Barba*, beard, and *rostris*, beak, as in *Myiarchus barbistrostris*, the Sad Flycatcher, the scientific name referring to rictal bristles

## Barlowi *BAR-lo-eye*

After Charles Barlow, South African businessman, as in *Calendula lauda barlowi*, Barlow's Lark

## Barnardius *bar-NAR-dee-us*

After Edward Barnard, zoologist, botanist, and horticulturalist, as in *Barnardius zonarius*, the Australian Ringneck

## Baroni *BA-ron-eye*

After O. T. Baron, German engineer and amateur ornithologist, as in *Craniolaeca baroni*, Baron's Spintail

## Bartletti *BART-let-tye*

After Abraham Bartlett, taxidermist and zoologist at the Zoological Society of London, as in *Crypturellus bartletti*, Bartlett's Tinamou

## Bartramia *bar-TRAM-ee-a*

After William Bartram, naturalist, botanist, and explorer; his father was known as the father of American botany, as in *Bartramia longicauda*, the Upland Sandpiper

## Baryphthengus *bar-if-THEN-gus*

Greek, *bary*, heavy, and *phthengus*, voice, as in *Baryphthengus martii*, the Rufous Motmot

## Basileuterus *bas-ih-LOY-ter-us*

Greek, *basil-*, royal, kingly, and *euter*, music as in *Basileuterus* (now *Myiothlypis*) *fraseri*, the Gray-and-gold Warbler

## Basilornis *bas-ih-LORN-is*

Greek, *basil-*, royal, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Basilornis celebensis*, the Sulawesi Myna

## Batesi *BATES-eye*

After George Bates, who wrote the *Handbook of the Birds of West Africa*, as in *Apus batesi*, Bates's Swift

## Bathmocercus *batb-mo-SIR-kus*

Greek, *bathmo*, step or degree, and Latin, *cercus*, tail, as in *Bathmocercus cerviniventris*, the Black-headed Rufous Warbler

## Batis *BA-tis*

Malay-Polynesian, plant, as in *Batis minor*, the Eastern Black-headed Batis, after an unidentified Greek bird that fed in the brambles

## Batrachostomus *ba-tra-ko-STO-mus*

Greek, *batracho*, frog, and *stoma*, mouth, as in *Batrachostomus moniliger*, the Sri Lanka Frogmouth

## Baumanni *BOW-man-nye*

After Oscar Baumann, Austrian explorer and geographer, as in *Phyllastrephus baumanni*, Baumann's Olive Greenbul

## Becki *BECK-eye*

After Rollo Beck, American bird collector, as in *Pseudobulweria becki*, Beck's Petrel

## Belcheri *BEL-cher-eye*

After Admiral Edward Belcher, British naval officer and explorer, as in *Larus belcheri*, Belcher's Gull

## Beldingi *BEL-ding-eye*

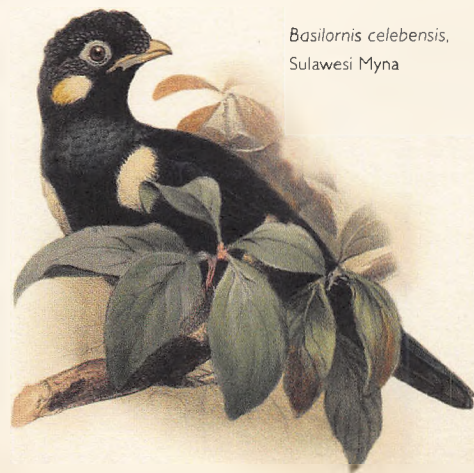
After Lyman Belding, American professional bird collector, as in *Geothlypis beldingi*, Belding's Yellowthroat

## Bella *BEL-la*

Beautiful, fair, as in *Goethalsia bella*, the Pirre Hummingbird

## Bellulus *Bell-LU-lus*

From *bellus*, pretty, as in *Margarornis bellulus*, the Beautiful Treerunner



*Basilornis celebensis*,  
Sulawesi Myna



**Bendirei** *ben-DEER-eye*

After Charles Emil Bendire, egg-collector, oologist, and US Army surgeon, as in *Toxostoma bendirei*, Bendire's Thrasher

**Bengalensis** *ben-ga-LEN-sis*

After the Bengal region shared by India and Bangladesh, as in *Bubo bengalensis*, the Indian Eagle-Owl

**Berlepschi** *ber-LEP-shy*

After Hans Hermann von Berlepsch, a German ornithologist, as in *Chaetocercus berlepschi*, Esmeraldas Woodstar

**Berliozi** *bear-lee-OZE-eye*

After Jaques Berlioz, French ornithologist, as in *Apus berliozi*, Forbes-Watson's Swift

**Berthelotii** *ber-te-LOT-ee-eye*

After Sabin Berthelot, French naturalist and author of the *Natural History of the Canary Islands*, as in *Anthus berthelotii*, Berthelot's Pipit

**Bewickii** *bee-WIK-ee-eye*

After Thomas Bewick, English naturalist and wood engraver, as in *Thryomanes bewickii*, Bewick's Wren

**Bias** *BY-as*

French, *biais*, slope, sideways, against the grain, as in *Bias musicus*, the Black-and-white Shrike-flycatcher

**Biarmicus** *Bi-ARM-i-cus*

From Biarmica, a region of Russia, as in *Falco biarmicus*, the Lanner Falcon

**Biatas** *by-AT-as*

Greek, forceful, mighty, as in *Biatas nigropectus*, the White-bearded Antshrike

**Bicalcarata**, -um, -us *by-kal-kar-AT-a/um/us*

*Bi-*, two, and *calcar*, spur, as in *Galloperdix bicalcarata*, the Sri Lanka Spurfowl

**Bicinctus** *by-SINK-tus*

*Bi-*, twice, and *cinctus*, encircled, surrounded, banded, as in *Treron bicinctus*, the Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, with an orange band on its chest

**Bicknelli** *BIK-nel-lye*

After Eugene Bicknell, American ornithologist and businessman, as in *Catharus bicknelli*, Bicknell's Thrush

## LATIN IN ACTION

*Eremophila biloph*a describes Temminck's (Horned) Lark as a two-crested bird with a love of lonely places. The two crests (or tufts or horns) are actually elongated feathers that are obvious on the head of the breeding male and more subtle on the female. The bird lives in far northern Africa, extending eastward to part of the Middle East, where it inhabits rocky, semi-desert habitats. Seventeen species of birds were anointed with the common name of Temminck, after Coenraad Temminck, a Dutch zoologist who wrote a manual

on the birds of Europe over the years 1815–1840 that was a standard for many years. "Lark" is from the Middle English *larke*, songbird.



*Eremophila biloph*a,  
Temminck's Lark

**Bicolor** *BY-ko-lor*

*Bi-*, two, and *color*, color, as in *Nigrita bicolor*, the Chestnut-breasted Nigrita (finch)

**Bicornis** *by-KOR-nis*

*Bi-*, two, and *cornis*, horned, as in *Buceros bicornis*, the Great Hornbill

**Bidentatus**, -a *by-den-TA-tus/ta*

*Bi-*, two, and *dentata*, teeth, as in *Lybius bidentatus*, the Double-toothed Barb

**Bifasciatus** *by-fa-see-AH-tus*

*Bi-*, two, and *fasciatus*, banded, as in *Saxicola* (now *Campicoloides*) *bifasciatus*, the Buff-streaked Chat

**Bilineata**, -us *by-lin-ee-AH-ta/tus*

*Bi-*, two, and *linea*, line, as in *Amphispiza bilineata*, the Black-throated Sparrow

## Bilopha, -us *by-LO-fa/fus*

*Bi-*, two, and *lophus*, crest, as in *Eremophila bilopha*, Temminck's Lark (see box)

## Bimaculata, -us, *by-mak-oo-LA-ta/tus*

*Bi-*, two, and *maculates*, spotted, as in *Melanocorypha bimaculata*, the Bimaculated Lark

## Binotata *by-no-TAT-a*

*Bi-*, two, and *nota*, marked, as in *Apalis binotata*, the Lowland Masked Apalis

## Birostris *by-ROSS-tris*

*Bi-*, two, and *rostris*, beak, as in *Ocyeros birostris*, the Indian Gray Hornbill

## Biscutata *bis-koo-TAT-a*

*Bi-*, two, and *scutum*, shield, as in *Streptoprocne biscutata*, the Biscutate Swift, in reference to the shape of the wings

## Bishopi *BISH-op-eye*

After Charles Bishop, American businessman who lived in Hawaii, as in *Moho bishopi*, Bishop's Oo

## Bistriatus *bis-tree-AH-tus*

*Bi-*, two, and *stria*, streak, as in *Burhinus bistriatus*, the Double-striped Thick-knee

## Bistrigiceps *bis-TRIH-ji-seps*

*Bi-*, two, *striga*, furrow, and *ceps*, head, as in *Acrocephalus bistrigiceps*, the Black-browed Reed Warbler

## Bitorquata, -us *by-tor-KWA-ta/tus*

*Bi-*, two, *torquatus*, collar, as in *Streptopelia bitorquata*, the Island Collared Dove

## Bivittata, -us *bi-vit-TAT-a/us*

*Bi-*, two, *vitta*, stripe, band, as in *Petroica bivittata*, the Mountain Robin

## Blanfordi *BLAN-for-dye*

After William Blanford, geologist and zoologist, as in *Pyrgilauda blanfordi*, Blanford's Snowfinch

## Bleda *BLED-a*

After Bleda the Hun, brother of Atilla, as in *Bleda syndactylus*, the Red-tailed Bristlebill

## Blythii *BLYTH-ee-eye*

After Edward Blyth, English zoologist, as in *Tragopan blythii*, Blyth's Tragopan

## Blythipicus *bly-thib-PIK-us*

After Edward Blyth, English zoologist, and *picus*, woodpecker, as in *Blythipicus pyrrhotis*, the Bay Woodpecker

## Bocagii *bo-KAJ-ee-eye*

After Portuguese naturalist José Vicente Barbosa du Bocage, as in *Nectarinia bocagii*, Bocage's Sunbird

## Boissonneaua *bwa-son-O-a*

After Adolph Boissonneau, French ornithologist and author, as in *Boissonneaua flavescens*, the Buff-tailed Coronet

## Bolbopsittacus *bol-bop-SIT-ta-kus*

Greek, *bolbo*, bulb, and *psittakos*, parrot, as in *Bolbopsittacus lunulatus*, the Guaiabero

## Bolborhynchus *bol-bo-RINK-us*

Greek, *bolbo*, bulb, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Bolborhynchus lineola*, the Barred Parakeet

## Boliviana, -us, -um *bo-liv-ee-AN-a/us/um*

After Bolivia, as in *Atilla bolivianus*, the White-eyed Atilla

*Bombycilla garrulus*,  
Bohemian Waxwing



**Bollii** *BOL-lee-eye*

After Carl Bolle, German collector and botanist,  
as in *Columba bollii*, Bolle's Pigeon

**Bombycilla** *bom-bi-SIL-la*

Greek, *bombyx*, silkworm, and Latin, *cilla*, hair, as in *Bombycilla garrulus*, the Bohemian Waxwing, with silky smooth plumage

**Bonapartei** *bo-na-PAR-tye*

After J. Bonaparte, American ornithologist, as in *Nothocercus bonapartei*, the Highland (or Bonaparte's) Tinamou

**Bonasa** *bo-NA-sa*

*Bonasmus*, wild bull, as in *Bonasa umbellus*, the Ruffed Grouse; probably refers to the sound of the bird's rapid wing-beating display, known as "drumming"

**Bonelli** *bo-NEL-lye*

After Franco Bonelli, Italian ornithologist and collector, as in *Phylloscopus bonelli*, the Western Bonelli's Warbler

**Boobook** *BOO-book*

After the call of various owls in Asia and Australia,  
as in *Ninox boobook*, the Southern Boobook

**Borbonica, -us** *bor-BON-ih-ka/kus*

After Ile Bourbon, the former name of Ile Reunion,  
as in *Phedina borbonica*, the Mascarene Martin

**Borealis** *bor-ee-AH-lis*

Northern, of the north, as in *Picoides borealis*, the Red-cockaded Woodpecker, or *Phylloscopus borealis*, the Arctic Warbler

**Borealoides** *bor-ee-a-LOID-eez*

Resembling the north, as in *Phylloscopus borealoides*, the Sakhalin Leaf Warbler

**Bornea** *BOR-nee-a*

After Borneo, as in *Eos bornea*, the Red Lory

**Bostrychia** *bo-STRICK-ee-a*

Greek, *bostrych*, curl, as in *Bostrychia olivacea*, the Olive Ibis, named for its curved bill

**Botaurus** *bo-TAW-rus*

*Bo*, cow, and *taurus*, bull, as in *Botaurus stellaris*, the Eurasian Bittern, referring to the bird's booming call



*Terpsiphone bourbonensis*,  
Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher

**Bottae** *BOT-tee*

After Carl-Emile Botta, French traveler and doctor,  
as in *Oenanthe bottae*, the Red-breasted Wheatear

**Botterii** *bot-TARE-ee-eye*

After Matteo Botteri, Yugoslavian ornithologist and collector,  
as in *Peucaea botterii*, Botteri's Sparrow

**Boucardi** *boo-KARD-eye*

After Adolphe Boucard, French naturalist, as in  
*Amazilia boucardi*, the Mangrove Hummingbird

**Bougainvillei** *boo-gen-VIL-lye*

After Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, French admiral and explorer,  
as in *Actenoides bougainvillei*, the Moustached Kingfisher

**Bourbonensis** *boor-bon-NEN-sis*

After Ile Bourbon, the former name of Ile Reunion, as in  
*Terpsiphone bourbonensis*, the Mascarene Paradise Flycatcher

**Boweri** *BOW-er-eye*

After Thomas Bowyer-Bower, English-born curator of ornithology in Australia, as in *Colluricincla boweri*, Bower's Shrikethrush

**Boyeri** *BOY-er-eye*

After Joseph Boyer, French sea captain and explorer, as in  
*Coracina boyeri*, Boyer's Cuckooshrike

**Braccatus** *brak-KA-tus*

Wearing trousers, as in *Moho braccatus*, the extinct Kauai Oo, a honeyeater, referring to its yellow-colored thighs



# Avian Adaptations

Since birds arrived on the scene over 150 million years ago, they diverged into a wide variety of niches and the adaptations that provide them with the means to live successfully. In spite of their diversity, birds are probably the most homogeneous group in the animal kingdom. They are all homeothermic (warm-blooded), they all lay eggs, the vast majority show some parental care, all have feathers, and all but 40 of 10,000 species can fly.

The skeleton of birds is made to withstand the stresses of flying and landing. Many of their bones are fused, such as the caudal vertebrae, forming the pygostyle, a tail structure covered with fat and muscle and sometimes called the "pope's nose." Bones of the pelvic girdle and some bones of the arm and hand are

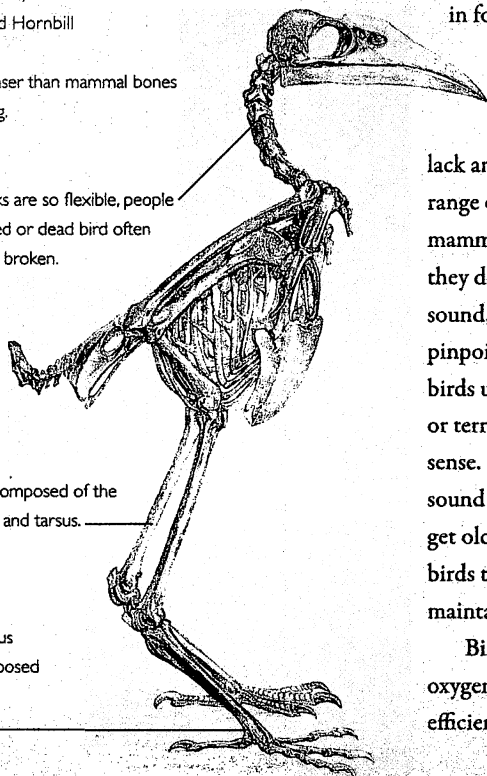
*Bucorvus abyssinicus*,  
Abyssinian Ground Hornbill

Bird bones are denser than mammal bones and are very strong.

Because birds' necks are so flexible, people picking up a stunned or dead bird often assume the neck is broken.

The tibiotarsus is composed of the partially fused tibia and tarsus.

The tarsometatarsus is the "ankle," composed of fused tarsal and metatarsal bones.



fused. The furcula (wishbone) and uncinata (hooked) processes of the ribs stiffen the skeleton while preserving flexibility. Instead of a toothed jaw, they have a beak. To manipulate objects, they have a very flexible neck with 13–25 cervical vertebrae, compared to seven for most mammals. Their bones are generally denser than mammalian bones, pneumatic and cross-hatched with struts, making them very strong.

Birds have large eyes with superb light-gathering power, visual acuity, and light sensitivity. They can see 180 degrees or more and keep everything in focus as their eyes are somewhat flattened. They have an enormous number of rods and cones (photoreceptive cells) in their retina. They can not only see visible light, but ultraviolet. Their lenses can change their optical properties quickly, allowing the birds to keep in focus and track objects like flying insects, and navigate through bushes and trees without collisions.

Birds' hearing is acute. Although most lack an external ear, their ear construction and the range of frequencies they can detect are similar to mammals. Owls can hear particularly well because they do have external pinna that help to capture sound, but theirs are asymmetrical so they can pinpoint the direction of the sound. Since many birds use calls or songs for courtship, identification, or territory defense, hearing is an important survival sense. In mammals the little hair cells that transmit sound from the ear to the brain die off as the animals get older, causing increasing degrees of deafness. In birds the hair cells are regenerated so they can maintain acute hearing throughout their life.

Birds use a lot of energy flying, requiring more oxygen and driving up body temperature. A very efficient respiratory and cooling system is made



*Bubo capensis*,  
Cape Eagle-Owl

The terminal barbs of owls' flight feathers do not hook together, producing a frayed edge for a virtually noiseless flight.

possible by air sacs, extensions of the lungs.

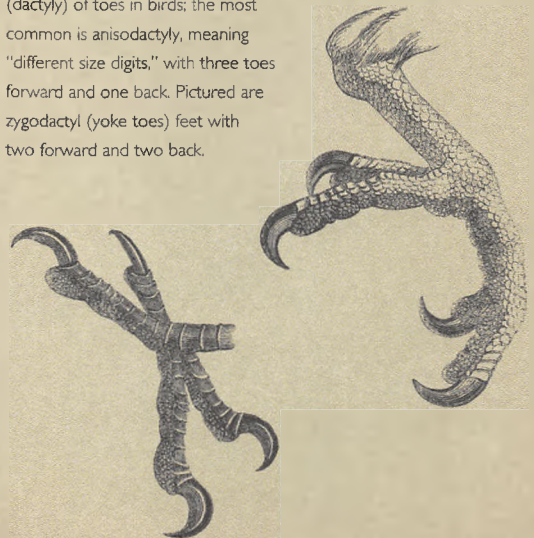
Although these extensions do not exchange oxygen, they provide an efficient and constant flow of air over the lungs. Birds do not have sweat glands, so air exchange across the lungs is the primary mechanism for cooling.

Since birds do not have teeth—although some have tooth-like projections on the edge of their jaws or on their palate—they cannot chew their food. They possess an expanded part of the esophagus called the crop that starts the digestion process. The partly digested food goes to the two-part stomach, the first part being the muscular crop that physically masticates the food, sometimes with the help of grit that the bird swallows. Pigeons and

doves (Columbiformes) can suck water up into their throats, but most birds have to fill their mouths with liquid and tilt their head back. To save weight, most birds do not have a urinary bladder and have minimal water requirements. Mammals produce urea, a toxic substance that needs to be diluted before it is passed from the body via the bladder. Birds produce the insoluble uric acid which can be excreted, along with the feces (bird droppings) with very little water loss.

Flying, especially migrating long distances every year, requires all these adaptations and more, making everyday survival a tenuous business. For songbirds even a short nap on the branch of a tree requires a special adaptation. Have you ever wondered how birds can sleep without falling out of a tree? It turns out that a special tendon running from the back of the leg to the toes contracts when the bird bends its legs to perch and pulls the toes into a curled position. When it flies off, the tendon stretches and the toes uncurl. Birds are amazing, indeed.

There are five basic arrangements (dactyly) of toes in birds; the most common is anisodactyly, meaning "different size digits," with three toes forward and one back. Pictured are zygodactyl (yoke toes) feet with two forward and two back.



**Brachycope** *brak-ee-KOPE-ee*

Greek, *brachy*, short, and *cope*, handle, as in *Brachycope anomala*, the Bob-tailed Weaver

**Brachydactyla** *brak-ee-dak-TIL-a*

Greek, *brachy*, short, and *dactyl*, finger or toe, as in *Certhia brachydactyla*, the Short-toed Treecreeper

**Brachypteracias** *bra-kip-ter-ACE-ee-as*

Greek, *brachy*, short, and *ptery*, wing, as in *Brachypteracias leptosomus*, the Short-legged Ground Roller

**Brachypterus** *bra-kip-TER-us*

Greek, *brachy*, short, and *ptery*-, wing, as in *Tachyeres brachypterus*, the flightless Falkland Steamer Duck

**Brachyramphus** *bra-ki-RAM-fus*

Greek, *brachy*, short, and *ramphus*, bill, as in *Brachyramphus marmoratus*, the Marbled Murrelet

**Brachyrhyncos**, -a *bra-kee-RINK-os/a*

Greek, *brachy*, short, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Corvus brachyrhynchus*, the American Crow

*Pitta brachyura*,  
Indian Pitta

**Brachyura**, -us *bra-kee-OO-ra/rus*

Greek, *brachy*, short, and *oura*, tail, as in *Pitta brachyura*, the Indian Pitta

**Bracteatus** *brak-tee-AH-tus*

Gold leaf, as in *Dicrurus bracteatus*, the Spangled Drongo

**Bradornis** *brad-OR-nis*

Greek, *brad*, slow, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Bradornis pallidus*, the Pale Flycatcher. Feeding on or near the ground, they are less active than other flycatchers

**Bradypterus** *brad-ip-TER-us*

Greek, *brady*, slow and *ptery*, winged, as in *Bradypterus baboecala*, the Little Rush Warbler. Unlike birds similar in appearance, this bird climbs through vegetation, skulks, and walks, rather than flies, from danger

**Brandti** *BRANT-eye*

After Johann Friedrich von Brandt, German zoologist, as in *Leucosticte brandti*, Brandt's Mountain Finch

**Branickii** *bran-IK-ee-eye*

After Heironim Graf von Branicki, Polish zoologist, as in *Leptosittaca branickii*, the Golden-plumed Parakeet

**Branta** *BRAN-ta*

Origin may be Old Norse, *brantgas*, the sheldrake, as in *Branta bernicla*, the Brant or Brent Goose

**Brasiliana**, -um, -us, -ensis

*bra-sil-ee-AN-a/um/us/bra-sil-ee-a-NEN-sis*

After Brazil, as in *Cercomacra brasiliana*, the Rio de Janeiro Antbird

**Brehmii** *BREM-ee-eye*

After Alfred Brehm, German collector and zoologist, as in *Psittacella brehmii*, Brehm's Tiger Parrot

**Brevicaudata** *bre-vi-kaw-DA-ta*

*Brevis*, short, and *caudata*, tailed, as in *Camaroptera brevicaudata*, the Gray-backed Camaroptera

**Brevipennis** *bre-vi-PEN-is*

*Brevis*, short, and *pennis*, feather, as in *Acrocephalus brevipennis*, the Cape Verde Warbler

**Brevipes** *breh-VIP-eez*

*Brevis*, short, and *pes*, foot, as in *Accipiter brevipes*, the Levant Sparrowhawk



**Brevirostris** *bre-vi-ROSS-tris*

*Brevis*, short, and *rostris*, beak, as in *Brachyrhamphus brevirostris*, Kittlitz's Murrelet

**Brevis** *BRE-vis*

*Brevis*, short, as in *Bycanistes brevis*, the Silvery-cheeked Hornbill (see box)

**Breweri** *BREW-er-eye*

After Thomas Mayo Brewer, American ornithologist, as in *Anas breweri*, Brewer's Duck, which is actually a hybrid between the Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos* and the Gadwall, *Anas strepera*

**Brookii** *BROOK-eye*

After Charles Brooke, a White Rajah of Sarawak, Malaysia, as in *Otus brookii*, Rajah Scops Owl

**Browni, -ii** *BROWN-eye/ee-eye*

After George Brown, English missionary to Melanesia, as in *Platycercus caledonicus brownii*, Brown's Parakeet, a subspecies of the Green Rosella

**Bruijnii** *BROIN-ee-eye*

After Anton Bruijn, a Dutch feather merchant, as in *Drepanornis bruijnii*, the Pale-billed Sicklebill

**Brunnea** *brun-NEE-a*

*Brunne*, brown, as in *Alcippe brunnea*, the Dusky Fulvetta

## LATIN IN ACTION

The Silvery-cheeked Hornbill's genus, *Bycanistes*, means "trumpeter," undoubtedly after its low trumpeting call. The specific epithet, *brevis*, refers to its relatively short bill, compared with other hornbills. Residents of Africa and Asia, hornbills have a long, stout, down-curved bill, with a structure unique to hornbills on top of their upper mandible. The casque varies among species and may be small, hollow, and light, or large, heavy, and reinforced with bone. The smaller casques seem to have little or no function but the larger ones may serve as resonating chambers for calls or for territorial dueling.

*Platycercus caledonicus brownii*,  
Brown's Parakeet (subspecies)

**Brunneicapillus** *brun-nee-ka-PIL-lus*

*Brunne*, brown, and *capilla*, cloak, as in *Aplonis brunneicapillus*, the White-eyed Starling

**Brunneicauda** *brun-nee-KAW-da*

*Brunne*, brown, and *cauda*, tail as in *Alcippe brunneicauda*, the Brown Fulvetta

**Brunneiceps** *BRUN-ni-seps*

*Brunne*, brown, and *ceps*, headed, as in *Yuhina brunneiceps*, the Taiwan Yuhina

**Brunneinucha** *brun-e-nee-NOO-ka*

*Brunne*, brown, and *nucha*, nape, as in *Arremon brunneinucha*, the Chestnut-capped Brush Finch

**Brunneipectus** *brun-nee-PEK-tus*

*Brunne*, brown, and *pectus*, neck, as in *Capito brunneipectus*, the Brown-chested Barbet

**Brunneiventris** *brun-nee-VEN-tris*

*Brunne*, brown, and *ventris*, belly, as in *Diglossa brunneiventris*, the Black-throated Flowerpiercer

**Brunneopygia** *brun-nee-o-PI-jee-a*

*Brunne*, brown, and *puge*, rump, as in *Drymodes brunneopygia*, the Southern Scrub Robin

**Brunneus** *BRUN-nee-us*

*Brunne*, brown, as in *Pycnonotus brunneus*, the Asian Red-eyed Bulbul

**Brunnicephalus** *brun-ni-se-FAL-us*

*Brunne*, brown, and *cephala*, head, as in *Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus*, the Brown-headed Gull

**Brunniceps** *BRUN-ni-seps*

*Brunne*, brown, and *ceps*, headed, as in *Myioborus brunniceps*, the Brown-capped Whitestart

**Brunnifrons** *BRUN-ni-fronz*

*Brunne*, brown, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Cettia brunnifrons*, the Gray-sided Bush Warbler

*Bubo scandiacus*,  
Snowy Owl

**Bubalornis** *boo-ba-LOR-nis*

Greek, *bubal*, buffalo, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Bubalornis niger*, the Red-billed Buffalo Weaver, which often associates with cattle

**Bubo** *BOO-bo*

Swelling, as in *Bubo scandiacus*, the Snowy Owl, or *Bubo bubo*, the Eurasian Eagle-Owl, although the name *Bubo* probably came from the owl's deep and resonant calls

**Bucco** *BOO-ko*

*Bucca*, mouth, as in *Bucco tamatia*, the Spotted Puffbird, with a distinctly large bill and mouth

**Bucephala** *boo-se-FAL-a*

Greek, *bous*, ox, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Bucephala clangula*, the Common Goldeneye. The shape of the head reminded the namer of an ox's head

**Bucorvus** *boo-KOR-vus*

Greek, *bu*, ox, and Latin, *corvus*, raven, as in *Bucorvus abyssinicus*, the Abyssinian Ground Hornbill. *Bu* can also refer to the large size of an ox and this is a large bird

**Bulleri** *BUL-ler-eye*

After Walter Lawry Buller, a New Zealand lawyer, naturalist and ornithologist, as in *Puffinus bulleri*, Buller's Shearwater

**Bullocki** *BUL-lok-eye*

After William Bullock, an amateur American ornithologist with a traveling museum, as in *Icterus bullocki*, Bullock's Oriole

**Burchelli** *BUR-chel-lye*

After William John Burchell, English explorer and naturalist, as in *Pterocles burchelli*, Burchell's Sandgrouse

**Burhinus** *bur-HINE-nus*

Greek, *bous*, ox, and *rhin*, nose or beak, as in *Burhinus capensis*, the Spotted Thick-knee

**Buteo** *BOO-tee-o*

Etymology unclear but a kind of hawk, as in *Buteo buteo*, the Common Buzzard

**Buteogallus** *boo-tee-o-GAL-lus*

*Buteo*, hawk, and *gallus*, cock or rooster, as in *Buteogallus anthracinus*, the Common Black Hawk

**Buthraupis** *boo-THRAW-pis*

Greek, *bu*, ox, and *thraupis*, tanager, as in *Buthraupis montana*, the Hooded Mountain Tanager

# C

## Cabanisi *ka-BAN-nis-eye*

After Jean Louis Cabanis, German founder and editor of *Journal für Ornithologie*, as in *Emberiza cabanisi*, Cabanis's Bunting

## Caboti *CAB-ot-i*

After Samuel Cabot, American physician and ornithologist, as in *Tragopan caboti*, Cabot's Tragopan

## Cacatua *ka-ka-TOO-a*

Dutch, *kakatoe*, or Malay, *kokatua*, cockatoo, as in *Cacatua sulphurea*, the Yellow-crested Cockatoo

## Cachinnans *ka-CHIN-nans*

Laughing, as in *Herpetotheres cachinnans*, the Laughing Falcon or Snake Hawk, after its loud call that resembles laughter

## Cacomantis *ka-ko-MAN-tis*

Greek, *caco-*, bad, ill omen, and *mantis*, a seer or prophet, as in *Cacomantis merulinus*, the Plaintive Cuckoo; the cuckoo was thought to be able to foretell the future

## Cactorum *kak-TOE-rum*

Greek, *kaktos*, cactus, as in *Melanerpes cactorum*, the White-fronted Woodpecker, which inhabits environments with cacti

## Caerulea *see-ROO-la*

Referring to sky, or sea, or blue, as in *Passerina caerulea*, the Blue Grosbeak

## Caerulatus *see-roo-LA-tus*

Referring to sky, or sea, or blue, as in *Cyornis caerulatus*, the Sunda Blue Flycatcher

## Caeruleirostris *see-roo-lee-eye-ROSS-tris*

*Caerul*, blue, and *rostris*, bill or beak, as in *Loxops caeruleirostris*, the Akekee, a honeycreeper with a blue bill

## Caeruleogrisea *see-roo-lee-o-GRISS-ee-a*

*Caerul*, blue, and *grisea*, gray, as in *Coracina caeruleogrisea*, the Stout-billed Cuckooshrike

## Caerulescens *see-roo-LES-sens*

Referring to sky, or sea, or blue, as in *Chen caerulescens*, the Snow or Blue Goose, because it has a blue morph

*Passerina caerulea*,  
Blue Grosbeak



## Caeruleus *see-ROO-lee-us*

Sky blue, as in *Cyanocorax caeruleus*, the Azure Jay

## Caeruleogularis *see-roo-le-o-goo-LAR-is*

*Caerul*, blue, and *gularis*, throat, as in *Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis*, the Blue-throated Toucanet

## Caesia, -us *SEE-zee-a/us*

Pertaining to Caesar's eyes, which were gray or gray-blue, as in *Thamnomanes caesius*, the bluish-gray Cinereous Antshrike

## Cafer *KAY-fer*

After South Africa, as in *Pycnonotus cafer*, the Red-vented Bulbul. The bird was mistakenly first named after South Africa

## Cahow *KA-how*

Imitative of the bird's call, as in *Pterodroma cahow*, the Bermuda Petrel, known in Bermuda as the Cahow

## Cairina *ky-REE-na*

After Cairo, Egypt, as origin, as in *Cairina moschata*, the Muscovy Duck, which is actually from South America

## Calamanthus *ka-lam-AN-thus*

Greek, *kalame*, a stalk of grain, and *anthus*, flower, as in *Calamanthus campestris*, the Rufous Fieldwren

## Calamonastes *kal-a-mo-NAS-teez*

Greek, *kalame*, a stalk of grain, and *astes*, singer, as in *Calamonastes simplex*, the Gray Wren-Warbler



## Calamospiza *kal-a-mo-SPY-za*

Greek, *kalame*, a stalk of grain, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Calamospiza melanocorys*, the Lark Bunting

## Calcarius *kal-KAR-ee-us*

*Calc*, of lime, or limestone, or heel, spur, as in *Calcarius lapponicus*, the Lapland Longspur or Bunting, which has a long rear toe

## Calendula *ka-len-DOO-la*

*Calendae*, little calendar or little clock, as in *Regulus calendula*, the Ruby-crowned Kinglet, perhaps having to do with the timing of its appearance during migration

## Caledonica, -us *kal-ih-DON-ih-ka/us*

After New Caledonia, as in *Coracina caledonica*, the South Melanesian Cuckooshrike and *Nycticorax caledonicus*, the Nankeen Night Heron

## Calicalicus *Cal-i-CAL-i-cus*

Derives from the local Madagascan name, Calicalac, of *Calicalicus madagascariensis*, the Red-tailed Vanga

## Californianus, Californica

*kal-ih-for-nee-AN-us/kal-ih-FOR-ni-ka*

After California, as in *Geococcyx californianus*, the Greater Roadrunner, and *Apelocoma californica*, the California Scrub-Jay

## Callacanthis *kal-la-KAN-this*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *acanthis*, a (gold) finch, as in *Callacanthis burtoni*, the Spectacled Finch



*Regulus calendula*,  
Ruby-crowned Kinglet

## Calliope *kal-LY-o-pee*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *ops*, voice, as in *Luscinia calliope*, the Siberian Rubythroat

## Callipepla *kal-li-PEP-la*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *pepla*, robe, as in *Callipepla californica*, the California Quail

## Calliphlox *KAL-li-flox*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *phlox*, a flower, as in *Calliphlox amethystina*, the Amethyst Woodstar

## Callocephalon *kal-lo-se-FAL-on*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Callocephalon fimbriatum*, the Gang-gang Cockatoo; Gang-gang comes from an Aboriginal language

## Callonetta *kal-lo-NET-ta*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *netta*, duck, as in *Callonetta leucophrys*, the Ringed Teal

## Calochaetes *kal-o-KEE-teez*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *chaete*, long flowing hair, mane, as in *Calochaetes coccineus*, the Vermilion Tanager; the feathers of the nape and wing coverts resemble a mane

## Calocitta *kal-o-SIT-ta*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and Latin, *citta*, magpie, jay, as in *Calocitta formosa*, the White-throated Magpie-Jay

## Calonectris *kal-o-NEK-tris*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *nectris*, swimmer, as in *Calonectris leucomelas*, the Streaked Shearwater

## Caloperdix *kal-o-PER-diks*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *perdix*, partridge, as in *Caloperdix ocellus*, the Ferruginous Partridge

## Calopterus *kal-OP-ter-us*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *ptery*, wing, as in *Mecocerculus calopterus*, the Rufous-winged Tyrannulet

## Calothorax *kal-o-THOR-aks*

Greek, *kallos*, beautiful, and *thorax*, breast or chest, as in *Calothorax pulcher*, the Beautiful Sheartail

## Calvus *KAL-vus*

Bald, as in *Sarcops calvus*, the Coletto (in the starling family)



*Calliphlox amethystina*,  
Amethyst Woodstar

## Calypte *ka-LIP-tee*

Greek, *calypto*, veiled, mantled, or hidden, as in *Calypte anna*, Anna's Hummingbird; may have to do with the head being covered in iridescent red feathers

## Calyplocichla *kal-ip-toe-SIK-la*

Greek, *calypto*, hidden, and *cichla*, thrush, as in *Calyplocichla serinus*, the Golden Greenbul, thrush-like in appearance

## Calypptomena *kal-ip-toe-MEN-a*

Greek, *calypto*, hidden, and *mena*, moon, as in *Calypptomena viridis*, the Green Broadbill, referring to the bill being mostly hidden by tufts of feathers

## Calyptrophilus *ka-lip-toe-FIL-us*

Greek, *calypto*, hidden, and *phila*, love, as in *Calyptrophilus tertius*, the Western Chat-Tanager, a secretive bird preferring dense undergrowth on the forest floor

## Calyptrorhynchus *ka-lip-tow-RINK-us*

Greek, *calypto*, hidden, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Calyptrorhynchus banksii*, the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo, with a partially hidden beak

## Camaroptera *kam-a-ROP-ter-a*

Greek, *kamara*, arch, and *ptery*, wing, as in *Camaroptera brachyura*, the Green-backed Camaroptera; the name may have to do with the way the bird holds its wings slightly away from the body

### L A T I N I N A C T I O N

The familiar Common Ostrich, *Struthio camelus*, is described by its scientific name, as the "camel sparrow," camel for its mammalian neighbors, but the description as a sparrow does not quite fit. At nearly 10 feet (3 meters) tall and 330 pounds (150 kilograms), they are the largest living birds in the world. Eight species of ostriches have become extinct since their evolution about 40 million years ago. The Common Ostrich is distantly related to the other groups of large flightless birds such as emus, cassowaries, rheas, and kiwis. These birds are tied together in a group called ratites, birds without a keel on their sternum to anchor flight muscles.

## Cambodiana *kam-bo-dee-AN-a*

After Cambodia, as in *Arborophila cambodiana*, the Chestnut-headed Partridge

## Camelus *kam-EL-us*

*Camel*, dromedary, as in *Struthio camelus*, the Common Ostrich (see box), the reference to camel alluding to its dry habitat

## Camerunensis *ka-mee-roo-NEN-sis*

After Cameroon, as in *Vidua camerunensis*, the Cameroon Indigobird

## Campanisoma *kam-pa-ni-SO-ma*

*Campan*, bell, and Greek, *soma*, body, as in *Myrmothera campanisona*, the Thrush-like Antpitta, whose very short tail gives its body a bell-like shape

## Campephaga *kam-pee-FAY-ga*

Greek, *camp*, caterpillar, and *phagein*, eat, as in *Campephaga flava*, the Black Cuckooshrike

## Campephilus *kam-pe-FIL-us*

*Camp*, of the fields, and Greek, *philos*, love, as in *Campephilus pollens*, the Powerful Woodpecker

## Campestris *kam-PESS-tris*

*Campestris*, deity of the fields, country goddess, as in *Calamanthus campestris*, the Rufous Fieldwren

## Camptorhynchus *kamp-tow-RIN-kus*

Greek, *campto*, curve, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Camptorhynchus labradorius*, the extinct Labrador Duck which had a slightly upcurved bill

## Camptostoma *kamp-to-STO-ma*

Greek, *campto*, curve, and *stoma*, mouth, as in *Camptostoma imberbe*, the Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, with an arched culmen (upper ridge of beak)

## Campylopterus *kam-pee-LOP-ter-us*

Greek, *campo*, bending, and *pteryx*, wing, as in *Campylopterus pampa*, the Wedge-tailed Sabrewing

## Campylorhynchus *kam-pee-lo-RINK-us*

Greek, *campo*, bending, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Campylorhynchus zonatus*, the Band-backed Wren, with a downcurved bill

## Camurus *ka-MOO-rus*

Curved or arched, as in *Tockus camurus*, the Red-billed Dwarf Hornbill with a curved bill



**Canadensis** *ka-na-DEN-sis*

After Canada or the far north, as in *Grus canadensis*, the Sandhill Crane

**Cancellata** *kan-sel-LA-ta*

Latticework, as in *Prosobonia cancellata*, the Kiritimati Sandpiper, perhaps describing the variable mottling and streaking on the back and breast

**Candei** *KAN-dee-eye*

White, brilliant, as in *Manacus candei*, the White-collared Manakin

**Candida** *kan-DEE-da*

Bright, clear, as in *Amazilia candida*, the White-bellied Emerald

**Canens** *KAN-enz*

In Roman Myth, Canens was the personification of song, as in *Arremonops conirostris*, the Black-striped Sparrow, with a conical bill and pleasant song

**Canicapillus** *kan-ib-ka-PIL-lus*

*Canus*, gray, and *capilla*, hair, as in *Dendrocopos canicapillus*, the Gray-capped Pygmy Woodpecker

**Caniceps** *KAN-ib-seps*

*Canus*, gray, and *ceps*, head, as in *Psittacula caniceps*, the Nicobar Parakeet

**Canicollis** *kan-ib-KOL-lis*

*Canus*, gray, and *collis*, collar, as in *Ortalis canicollis*, the Chaco Chachalaca

**Canicularis** *kan-ib-koo-LAR-is*

*Canus*, gray, and *ularis*, partial circle or half moon, as in *Eupsittula canicularis*, the Orange-fronted Parakeet (or Half-moon Conure)

**Canifrons** *KAN-ib-fronz*

*Canus*, gray, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Spizixos canifrons*, the Crested Finchbill

**Canigularis** *kan-ib-goo-LAR-is*

*Canus*, gray, and *gularis*, throat, as in *Chlorospingus canigularis*, the Ashy-throated Bush Tanager

**Canorus** *kan-OR-us*

Pertaining to melody or tune, as in *Cuculus canorus*, the Common Cuckoo. Its song doesn't have much of a tune but is well-known

**Cantans** *KAN-tanz*

Singing, of song, as in *Cisticola cantans*, the Singing Cisticola

**Canus** *KAN-us*

White or gray, as in *Agapornis canus*, the Gray-headed Lovebird

**Canutus** *kan-OO-tus*

Possibly from Denmark's King Canute, as in *Calidris canutus*, the Red Knot

**Capense, -is** *ka-PEN-see/sis*

Of the cape, as in *Zonotrichia capensis*, Rufous-collared Sparrow, referring to southern capes such as Cape Horn and Cape of Good Hope, as in *Daption capense*, the Cape Petrel

**Capitalis** *kap-ih-TAL-is*

Referring to the head, as in *Grallaria capitalis*, the Bay Antpitta, perhaps because of the top of the head being darker

**Capitata, -us** *kap-ih-TA-ta/tus*

*Capit-*, headed, as in *Paroaria capitata*, Yellow-billed Cardinal, with a distinctive red head

**Capito** *ka-PEE-to*

*Capito*, large head, as in *Tregellasia capito*, the Pale-yellow Robin, referring to the large-appearing head

**Caprimulgus** *ka-pri-MUL-gus*

*Capri-*, goat, and *mulg*, to milk, as in *Caprimulgus europaeus*, the European Nightjar; the scientific name comes from the old idea that these large-mouthed birds suckled on goats

**Caracara** *ka-ra-KA-ra*

Native Indian name for bird after its call, as in *Caracara cheriway*, the Northern Crested Caracara

*Cardinalis cardinalis*,

Northern Cardinal



**Carbo** *KAR-bo*

Glowing coal, charcoal, as in *Cephus carbo*, the Spectacled Guillemot, in reference to its dark gray to nearly black plumage

**Cardinalis** *kar-di-NAL-is*

Principal or chief, as in *Cardinalis cardinalis*, the Northern Cardinal

**Carduelis** *kar-doo-EL-is*

*Carduelis*, goldfinch or thistlefinch, as in *Carduelis carduelis*, the European Goldfinch

**Carolinae** *kar-o-LIN-ee*

After Carolina, as in *Horornis carolinae*, the Tanimbar Bush Warbler, after the Caroline Islands in the South Pacific

**Carolinensis** *kaa-ro-li-NEN-sis*

After Carolina, as in *Sitta carolinensis*, the White-breasted Nuthatch

**Carolinus** *kar-o-LINE-us*

After Carolina, as in *Euphagus carolinus*, the Rusty Blackbird

*Sitta carolinensis*,  
White-breasted Nuthatch

**Carpococcyx** *kar-po-KOK-siks*

Greek, *carpo*, fruit, and *coccyx*, cuckoo, as in *Carpococcyx viridis*, the Sumatran Ground Cuckoo

**Carunculata** *ka-run-koo-LA-ta*

*Caruncul*, a bit of flesh, as in *Paradigalla carunculata*, the Long-tailed Paradigalla; refers to the bird's colorful facial warts

**Carunculatus** *kar-un-koo-LAT-us*

*Caruncul*, a bit of flesh, as in *Grus carunculata*, the Wattle Crane

**Caryothraustes** *kar-ee-o-THRAWS-teez*

Greek, *caryo*, a nut, and *thraustes*, crack, as in *Caryothraustes canadensis*, the Yellow-green Grosbeak, with a powerful beak for cracking nuts

**Cassini** *KAS-sin-eye*

After John Cassin, American ornithologist and first serious, accomplished bird taxonomist, as in *Vireo cassinii*, Cassin's Vireo

**Castanea, -us** *kas-TAN-ee-a/us*

Chestnut-brown colored, as in *Anas castanea*, the Chestnut Teal and *Myiophonus castaneus*, the Brown-winged Whistling Thrush

**Castaneiceps** *kas-tan-ee-EYE-seps*

*Castanea*, chestnut-brown colored, and *ceps*, head, as in *Ploceus castaneiceps*, the Taveta Weaver

**Castaneicollis** *kas-tan-ee-eye-KOL-lis*

*Castanea*, chestnut-brown colored, and *collis*, collared, as in *Pternistis castaneicollis*, the Chestnut-naped Francolin

**Castaneiventris** *kas-tan-ee-eye-VEN-tris*

*Castanea*, chestnut-brown colored, and *ventris*, belly, as in *Monarcha castaneiventris*, the Chestnut-bellied Monarch

**Castaneocapilla** *kas-tan-ee-o-ka-PIL-la*

*Castanea*, chestnut-brown colored, and *capilla*, hair, as in *Myioborus castaneocapilla*, the Tepui Whitestart

**Castaneocoronata** *kas-tan-ee-o-ko-ro-NA-ta*

*Castanea*, chestnut-brown colored, and *coronatus*, crowned, as in *Cettia castaneocoronata*, the Chestnut-headed Tesia (Polish for loved by god)

**Castanotis** *kas-tan-O-tis*

*Castanea*, chestnut-brown colored, and *oto*, ear, as in *Pteroglossus castanotis*, the Chestnut-eared Aracari

**Castanotus** *kas-tan-O-tus*

*Castanea*, chestnut-brown colored, and *noto*, back, as in *Turnix castanotus*, the Chestnut-backed Buttonquail

**Cathartes** *ka-THAR-teez*

Greek, *katharos*, clean, pure, as in purifier or purger, as in *Cathartes aura*, the Turkey Vulture, which scavenges, thereby clearing away dead animals

**Catharus** *ka-THAR-us*

Greek, *kathartes*, cleanser, as in *Catharus gracilirostris*, the Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush, probably referring to the song of the bird

**Caudata**, -us *kaw-DA-ta-tus*

*Cauda*, tail, as in *Turdoides caudata*, the Common Babbler

**Caudifasciatus** *kaw-di-fas-se-AH-tus*

*Cauda*, tail, and *fasciatus*, banded, as in *Tyrannus caudifasciatus*, the Loggerhead Kingbird

**Cauta** *KAW-ta*

To search, as in *Thalassarche cauta*, the Shy Albatross

**Cayana** *kye-EN-a*

After Cayenne, a city in French Guiana, as in *Cotinga cayana*, the Spangled Cotinga, common name from the Tupi language of Brazil

**Cayanensis** *kye-a-NEN-sis*

After Cayenne, a city in French Guinea, as in *Icterus cayanensis*, the Epauler Oriole

**Cecropis** *se-KROP-is*

After Kekrops (Cecrops), an early king of Attika and founder of Athens, depicted as a man with a serpent's tail in place of legs, as in *Cecropis cucullata*, the Greater Striped Swallow, with long tail feathers

**Celata** *se-LA-ta*

Hidden, as in *Leiothlypis celata*, the Orange-crowned Warbler, referring to the usually hidden orange crown

**Celebensis** *sel-a-BEN-sis*

Refers to the Celebes Islands, now known as Sulawesi, as in *Basilornis celebensis*, the Sulawesi Mya

**Centrocerus** *sen-tro-SIR-kus*

Greek, *kentron*, spur, and *kerko*, point, as in *Centrocerus urophasianus*, the Sage Grouse



*Cephalopterus ornatus*,  
Amazonian Umbrellabird

**Centropus** *sen-TRO-pus*

Greek, *kentron*, point, and *pous*, foot, as in *Centropus burchelli*, Burchell's Coucal, referring to the long hind toe. Coucal from the French, perhaps from *couc(ou)*, cuckoo, and *al(ouette)*, lark

**Cephalopterus** *se-fal-OP-ter-us*

*Cephalo*, head, and Greek, *pteryx*, wing, as in *Cephalopterus ornatus*, the Amazonian Umbrellabird

**Cephalopyrus** *se-fal-o-PY-rus*

*Cephalo*, head, and Greek, *pyro*, flame (colored), as in *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*, the Fire-capped Tit

**Centurus** *sen-TOO-rus*

Greek, *kentron*, point, and *oura*, tail, as in *Centurus* (now *Melanerpes*) *carolinus*, the Red-bellied Woodpecker, referring to the pointed tail of all woodpeckers (red-bellied is an odd name as there is merely a wash of pink on the abdomen)

**Cephus** *SEP-fus*

Greek, *kepphos*, meaning seabird, as in *Cephus columba*, the Pigeon Guillemot

**Cercococcyx** *ser-ko-KOK-siks*

Greek, *cercu*, tail, and *coccyx*, cuckoo, as in *Cercococcyx olivinus*, the Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo

**Cercomacra** *sir-ko-MAK-ra*

Greek, *cercu*, tail, and *macro*, large, long, as in *Cercomacra serva*, the Black Antbird



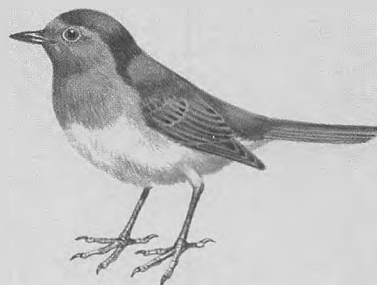
# DAVID LAMBERT LACK

(1910–1973)

David Lambert Lack perhaps had more influence on field ornithology than any other ornithologist. Whilst still an amateur, Lack became the leading British ornithologist of his time and a respected evolutionary biologist, ecologist, and population biologist. Among his many achievements, he was director of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at Oxford University, fellow of the Royal Society, and president of both the International Ornithological Congress and the British Ecological Society.

The son of a well-known and prosperous London surgeon, David Lack (born in 1910) lived a sumptuous life in a house with seven servants. He began learning about birds at an early age, compiling his first life list at the age of nine and identifying 100 species by the age of 15. Before he even entered college he published his first scientific paper. He attended Cambridge University, where he was elected president of the Cambridge Ornithological Club and began a friendship with Julian Huxley, an influential British evolutionist and proponent of natural selection.

From 1933 to 1940 he taught at Dartington Hall, a progressive private school, except for a year's leave in 1938 when he spent time studying the birds of the Galapagos. During World War II he served with the Army Operational Research Group, helping to develop radar. This experience was valuable later, enabling him to use radar in his studies of bird



*Erithacus rubecula*,  
European Robin

The European Robin, pictured here, and the distantly related American Robin are commonly seen in literature, in folklore, and as holiday icons.

migration. In 1945 he became a professional ornithologist and served as director of the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology, Oxford, until his death.

Lack's first substantial work, the popular *Life of the Robin* (1943), has informative and entertaining chapters on the life history of the bird, including song, flight, territory, and age, as a result of using color banding (or ringing) and other simple techniques over a four-year period. He was one of the originators of avian life history studies in Britain and influenced ornithologists around the world. He also had some ideas that were novel for the time. Lack debunked the idea that robins sing because they are happy or because they are trying to attract a female. He concluded that the song is to warn off rivals as

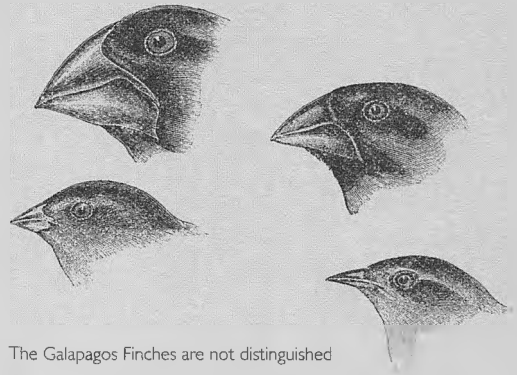
"Like many other naturalists, I was often as a boy exalted by natural beauty but this happened less often as I grew older, though when it came it was more intense."

*David Lambert Lack*

part of maintaining a territory. He also emphasized the idea that bird clutches will only be as large as the food supply would support but that they would be as large as possible.

Emanating from his meticulous field studies in the Galapagos and his measurement of the beaks of 8,000 museum skins at the Museum of Natural History in New York, *Darwin's Finches* was perhaps his most famous and influential work. It provides a fascinating account of the 14 specialized species of finch that have evolved from an original stock of seed-eating finches. This book became a classic of ornithology. Before the publication of this work, biology books of the time never mentioned the finches of the Galapagos. Now biology, zoology, ecology, and evolutionary-themed books all do, and because of Lack's book, the birds are commonly called "Darwin's Finches."

Such fieldwork inevitably led Lack to the consideration of more theoretical questions. In particular, he studied the factors controlling numbers in natural populations and concluded that such factors act more severely when numbers are high than when they are low. The irregularities of population fluctua-



The Galapagos Finches are not distinguished by their plumage, as it is mainly brown to black, but by their differing beak sizes which allow species to share a habitat.

tion suggested to Lack that the control mechanisms must be very complex. He discusses these ideas in *Natural Regulation of Animal Numbers* (1954) and *Population Studies of Birds* (1966). His theory was variously interpreted by professionals like Richard Dawkins, who claimed that it supported the theory of the "selfish gene."

Lack's ideas on speciation, ecological isolation, group selection, migration, and the evolution of reproductive strategies are best summarized in his two most influential books, *The Natural Regulation of Animal Numbers* (1954) and *Ecological Adaptations for Breeding in Birds* (1968). His ideas ushered in a new field of thought and he is often considered the "father of evolutionary ecology."

When Lack died in 1973, he was working on a study of bird populations on the islands of the West Indies, a return to an earlier interest in island avifaunas. Although it still needed editing to prepare it for publication, his research on the topic was completed before his death at age 63.

*Geospiza magnirostris*,  
Large Ground Finch

The Large Ground Finch, largest of Darwin's Finches, specializes in eating large, hard seeds off the ground.



**Cercomela** *sir-ko-MEL-a*

Greek, *cerco*, tail, and *melas*, black, as in *Cercomela* (now *Oenanthe familiaris*, the Familiar Chat

**Cercotricha** *sir-ko-TRICK-a*

Greek, *cerco*, tail, and *trikhas*, thrush, as in *Cercotricha* (now *Erythropygia signata*, the Brown Scrub Robin, referring to the typical thrush's tail

**Certhia** *SIR-thee-a*

Greek, *kethios*, a tree creeper, as in *Certhia brachydactyla*, the Short-toed Treecreeper

**Ceryle** *sir-IL-ee*

Greek, *kerulos*, a sea bird, as in *Ceryle rudis*, the Pied Kingfisher, more likely to be found along rivers than the sea

**Chaetocercus** *kee-to-SIR-kus*

Greek, *chaeto*, spine or hair, and *cerco*, tail, as in *Chaetocercus mulsant*, the White-bellied Woodstar, with a double-pointed tail

**Chaetoptila** *kee-top-TIL-a*

Greek, *chaeto*, spine or hair, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Chaetoptila angustipluma*, the extinct Kioea, distinguished by the bristle-like feathers of the head and neck

**Chaetorhynchus** *kee-tow-RINK-us*

Greek, *chaeto*, spine or hair, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Chaetorhynchus papuensis*, the Pygmy Drongo

**Chaetura** *kee-TOO-ra*

Greek, *chaeto*, spine or hair, and *oura*, tail, as in *Chaetura fumosa*, the Costa Rican Swift; the Swift's tail is typically very short with stiff feather shafts that allow it to perch vertically on cliff walls

*Progne chalybea*,

Gray-breasted Martin

**Chalcomelas** *kal-ko-MEL-as*

Greek, *chalco*, copper, and *melas*, black or dark, as in *Cinnyris chalcomelas*, the Violet-breasted Sunbird

**Chalcomitra** *kal-ko-MIT-ra*

Greek, *chalco*, copper, and Latin *mitra*, cap, as in *Chalcomitra amethystina*, the Amethyst Sunbird

**Chalcopsitta** *kal-kop-SIT-ta*

Greek, *chalco*, copper, and Latin *psitta*, parrot, as in *Chalcopsitta atra*, the Black Lory, with gold-bronze colored underwing and tail

**Chalybea** *ka-lib-BEE-a*

Steel, as in *Progne chalybea*, the Gray-breasted Martin, referring to the blue-gray color of the back

**Chamaea** *ka-MEE-a*

Greek, on the ground, low, as in *Chamaea fasciata*, the Wrentit, that spends most of its time in the brush

**Chapmani** *CHAP-man-eye*

After Frank Chapman, curator of ornithology for the American Museum of Natural History, New York, as in *Chaetura chapmani*, Chapman's Swift

**Charadrius** *kar-A-dree-us*

Plover, as in *Charadrius vociferous*, the Killdeer

**Chasiempis** *kas-ee-EM-pis*

Greek, *chasma*, a gap, and *empis*, a gnat, as in *Chasiempis ibidis*, the Oahu Elepaio, a flycatcher endemic to Hawaii; refers to the bird's insect-catching lifestyle

**Chelictinia** *kel-ik-TIN-ee-a*

Greek, *chelidon*, swallow, and *ictin*, a kite, as in *Chelictinia riocourii*, the Scissor-tailed Kite; birds called kites were named after the toy

**Chelidoptera** *kel-ih-DOP-ter-a*

Greek, *chelidon*, swallow, and *ptery*, wing, as in *Chelidoptera tenebrosa*, the Swallow-winged Puffbird

**Chen** *KEN*

Greek, goose, as in *Chen rossii*, Ross's Goose

**Chenonetta** *ken-o-NET-ta*

Greek, *chen*, goose, and *netta*, duck, as in *Chenonetta jubata*, the Maned Duck





*Accipiter chilensis*,  
Chilean Hawk

### Childonias *kil-DON-ee-as*

Greek, *kheldonias*, referring to a swallow, probably because the bird resembles a large swallow, as in *Childonias hybrida*, the Whiskered Tern

### Chilensis *chi-LEN-sis*

After Chile, as in *Accipiter chilensis*, the Chilean Hawk

### Chimaera *ky-MEE-ra*

After the ancient Greek mythical beast made of parts of different animals, as in *Uratelornis chimaera*, the Long-tailed Ground Roller, that looks as if it was made of different birds

### Chinensis *chy-NEN-sis*

After China, where it was first described, as in *Oriolus chinensis*, the Black-naped Oriole

### Chloephaga *klo-ee-FAY-ga*

*Chloe*, yellow or yellowish and Greek, *phagin*, to eat, as in *Chloephaga hybrida*, the Kelp Goose, which eats green algae and other green plants

### Chlorocephalus *klo-ro-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *chloro-*, green, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Oriolus chlorocephalus*, the Green-headed Oriole

### Chlorocercus *klo-ro-SIR-kus*

Greek, *chloro-*, green, and *cercus*, tail, as in *Lorius chlorocercus*, the Yellow-bibbed Lory

### Chloroceryle *klo-ro-se-RIL-ee*

Greek, *chloro-*, green, and *ceryle*, kingfisher, as in *Chloroceryle amazona*, the Amazon Kingfisher; Kingfisher comes from "king of the fishers"

### Chlorophonia *klo-ro-FONE-ee-a*

Greek, *chloro-*, green, and *phono-*, voice, as in *Chlorophonia cyanea*, the Blue-naped Chlorophonia

### Chloropus *klor-O-pus*

Greek, *chloro-*, green, and *pous*, foot, as in *Gallinula chloropus*, the Common Moorhen

### Chordeiles *kor-de-IL-eez*

A stringed instrument, dance, moving around (unclear), as in *Chordeiles minor*, the Common Nighthawk; name may derive from the bird's circling the sky catching insects in the evening

### Chrysia *KRIS-ee-a*

*Chrys*, gold, as in *Geotrygon chrysia*, the Key West Quail-Dove which is rusty-cinnamon above with an overlay of iridescent colors, imparting a goldish sheen

### Ciconia *si-KO-nee-a*

Stork, as in *Ciconia ciconia*, the White Stork (see box)

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

It is not unusual for the genus and species to be identical, as in *Ciconia ciconia*. This may not seem very descriptive but since the White Stork is so familiar, it works. "Stork" may derive from the Old English *storc*, stiff or strong, describing the bird's upright posture. Common across Europe, associated with human dwellings and often building large nests on them, these birds feature in many myths and legends. There are numerous explanations for the idea that storks deliver babies, but the best may be that it was used by parents to tell children about the new baby in the house without embarrassment.

**Cinclus** *SINK-lus*

Greek, *kinklos*, thrush that lives near water, as in *Cinclus cinclus*, the White-throated Dipper, which feeds and nests streamside

**Cincta**, -us *SINK-ta/tus*

*Cingere*, surround, encircle, as in *Riparia cincta*, the Banded Martin, with a band of brown encircling its breast

**Cinereicauda** *sin-air-ee-eye-KOW-da*

*Cinus*, ashes, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Lampornis cinereicauda*, the Gray-tailed Mountaingem

**Cinereiceps** *sin-air-ee-EYE-seps*

*Cinus*, ashes, and *ceps*, headed, as in *Malacocincla cinereiceps*, the Ashy-headed Babbler

**Cinereus** *sin-AIR-ee-us*

*Cinus*, ashes, ash-colored, as in *Xolmis cinereus*, the Gray Monjita

**Cinnyris** *SIN-ni-ris*

From the Greek Hesychius of Alexandria, who called some unknown bird *kinnuris*, as in *Cinnyris coquerellii*, the Mayotte Sunbird

**Circus** *SIR-kus*

*Circus*, race course, as in *Circus cyaneus*, the Hen Harrier, which hunts in a more or less circular course

*Colaptes auratus*,  
Northern Flicker

**Cirrhata** *sir-HA-ta*

Curly-headed, as in *Fratercula cirrhata*, the Tufted Puffin, known for the yellow tufts extending back from its eyes

**Cisticola** *sis-ti-KO-la*

*Cista*, a wooden basket, and *colo*, dwell, as in *Cisticola natalensis*, the Croaking Cisticola, whose nest is in the shape of a ball or basket

**Cistothorus** *sis-tow-THOR-us*

Greek, *kistos*, shrub, and *thorus*, a bed, as in *Cistothorus palustris*, the Marsh Wren, which hides its nest in shrubs

**Citrina** *si-TRY-na*

Citrus or lemon tree, as in *Setophaga citrina*, the Hooded Warbler, with a lemon-yellow face

**Clangula** *klang-GOO-la*

*Clangere*, to resound, as in *Clangula hyemalis*, the Long-tailed Duck, after the bird's distinctive call

**Clypeata** *kli-pee-AH-ta*

*Clypeum*, shield, as in *Anas clypeata*, the Northern Shoveler, referring to its spoon-shaped bill

**Coccyzus** *KOK-si-zus*

Latinized from Greek *kokkux*, cuckoo, shaped like a cuckoo's bill, as in *Coccyzus minor*, the Mangrove Cuckoo

**Coccothraustes** *kock-ko-THRAW-steez*

*Cocco*, seed, and *thraustes*, to eat, as in *Coccothraustes coccothraustes*, the Hawfinch

**Cochlearius** *koke-lee-AR-ee-us*

*Cochlear*, spoon or spoonful, as in *Cochlearius cochlearius*, the Boat-billed Heron, with a large spoon-shaped bill

**Coerulescens** *seh-roo-LES-senz*

Bluish, becoming bluish, as in *Apelocoma coerulescens*, the Florida Scrub Jay

**Colaptes** *ko-LAP-teez*

Latinized from Greek, *kolapto*, to chisel or peck, as in *Colaptes auratus*, the Northern Flicker

**Colchicus** *kol-KEE-kus*

After the ancient country of Colchis on the Black Sea where *Phasianus colchicus*, the Common Pheasant, originated

# CINNYRIS

There are 132 species of sunbird; of the 15 genera, *Cinnyris* (*SIN-ni-ris*) is the largest, with about 45 species. They are typically very small and colorful birds, found in Africa, southern Asia, parts of the Middle East, and the northern tip of Australia. Their main food is nectar, but they supplement their diet with insects for protein when raising young and occasionally eat fruit. They are Old World ecological

equivalents of the New World hummingbirds, one main difference being that the sunbirds are passerines (songbirds of the order Passeriformes) while the hummingbirds are in their own order, Apodiformes, along with swifts. *Cinnyris* got its name from the Greek Hesychius of Alexandria who called some unknown bird *kinnuris*.

Unlike hummingbirds, which typically hover when feeding on nectar, sunbirds usually feed from a perch. They have long, curved bills to reach down into the corolla of flowers, but when the corolla tube is too long, they use their bill to puncture the base of the flower. The tongue is extra long, able to project far past the tip of the bill and rolls up from



*Cinnyris ludovicensis*,  
Ludwig's Double-collared  
Sunbird

Sunbirds and hummingbirds represent an example of convergent evolution.

the edges, forming a kind of straw. The end of the tongue is split and jagged on the edges and serves to sop up the nectar, which is drawn up the tubular tongue by capillary action. The very colorful males

have longer bills and tongues than the much plainer females, presumably enabling the sexes to exploit different flower sources for nectar.

All sunbirds are strikingly beautiful, but only one, the Beautiful Sunbird, gets the name *C. pulchellus*, after the Latin for beautiful, but the Superb Sunbird *C. superbus*, Latin for splendid, superb, and the Regal Sunbird, *C. regius*, Latin for kingly, get the point across. The Eastern Double-collared Sunbird, however, attractive in its own right, does not seem to deserve the unflattering name *C. mediocris*, Latin for ordinary.

Like the similar small-bodied hummingbirds of cold environs, sunbirds that live at high altitudes enter a state of torpor at night to preserve their stored energy. The Southern Double-collared Sunbird, *C. chalybeus*, can lower its body temperature by up to 62.6°F (17°C).



*Cinnyris coquerellii*,  
Mayotte Sunbird



# COLUMBA

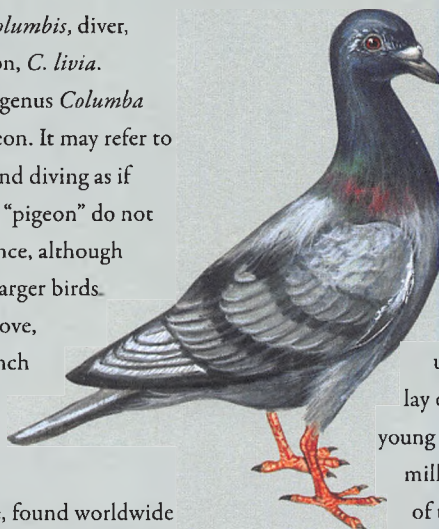
Aristophanes gave the name *kolumbis*, diver, to the Rock Dove or Pigeon, *C. livia*.

The Latinized form of the Greek genus *Columba* (*ko-LUM-ba*) means dove or pigeon. It may refer to their flight behavior, swooping, and diving as if swimming. The terms “dove” and “pigeon” do not denote any real biological difference, although those named pigeons tend to be larger birds. Old English *dufe*, dive, gives us dove, and pigeon derives from Old French *pigeon*, meaning young dove.

The *Columba* genus contains 35 species out of 305 species in the family Columbidae, found worldwide except for the extreme south and north, and the driest areas of the Sahara. *Columba* species are mainly Old World, but *C. livia*, the Rock Dove, has been introduced virtually everywhere. The specific epithet *livia* comes from the Latin *livor*, bluish, referring to the bird’s grayish-blue coloration.

The Rock Dove has had an amazing history as a messenger from ancient Greece until the end of World War II. Pigeons were an important form of communication during World War I as telegraph lines were not complete. One pigeon, called Cher Ami, delivered a message that saved allied troops and was awarded the Croix de Guerre. For a long time doves have appeared in Olympic opening ceremonies and they have been domesticated and bred into about 200 forms, including racers, homing pigeons, rollers, tumblers, highflyers, and pouters.

Members of *Columba*, like most doves/pigeons, eat seeds,



*Columba livia*,  
Rock Dove or Pigeon

fruits, plant parts, and invertebrates. While almost all other birds have to tilt their heads up to drink by letting gravity put water down their throats, pigeons can suck up water to drink. They typically lay only two eggs and, when the young hatch, feed them with pigeon milk, the sloughed-off lining of a part of the esophagus called the crop.

Like many birds, doves have no gall bladder; because they produced no bile, early naturalists surmised that the birds must have a sweet disposition.

Unlike mammals birds have no sweat glands, so they depend on their circulatory and respiratory systems to dissipate excess body heat. They pant or vibrate their throat (called gular fluttering) and lose some heat through the skin. Doves also have a unique plexus of veins and arteries around their esophagus;

when the bird is stressed, it expands and deflates its esophagus, transferring heat from the plexus to the esophagus where it escapes through evaporative cooling.



*Columba delegorguei*,  
Eastern Bronze-naped Pigeon

Thirty percent of *Columba* species are considered threatened or near-threatened. Habitat loss is a big factor but some pigeons and doves are hunted for food or sport.

**Colinus** *ko-LEE-nus*

Latinized form of *zolin*, a Native American word for partridge, as in *Colinus cristatus*, the Crested Bobwhite

**Collaris** *kol-LAR-is*

Collar, as in *Aythya collaris*, the Ring-necked Duck

**Columba** *ko-LUM-ba*

Pigeon or dove, perhaps derived from its call, as in *Columba livia*, the Rock Dove or Pigeon. Pigeon derives from the French and dove from the Anglo-Saxon, but there is no biological difference between the two

**Columbigallina** *ko-lum-bi-gal-LIN-na*

*Columbi-*, pigeon and *gallina*, hen or cock, as in *Columbigallina minuta*, the Plain-breasted Ground Dove, perhaps because of the way the bird walks on the ground

**Columbina** *ko-lum-bi-na*

Dove-like as in *Columbina passerina*, the Common Ground Dove

**Concolor** *KON-ko-lor*

Of one color, as in *Corythaixoides concolor*, the all-gray Gray Go-Away Bird

**Concreta** *kon-KREE-ta*

Actual, large, strong, as in *Platysteira concreta*, the Yellow-bellied Wattle-eye

**Contopus** *kon-TOE-pus*

Greek, *kontos*, short, and *pous*, foot as in *Contopus lugubris*, the Dark Pewee

**Conuropsis** *kon-ur-OP-sis*

*Conurus*, a genus of Old World parakeets, and *opsis*, appearing like, as in *Conuropsis carolinensis*, the Carolina Parakeet, but it was an error in taxonomy

**Cooperi** *KOO-per-eye*

After William C. Cooper, one of the founders of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, as in *Accipiter cooperii*, Cooper's Hawk

**Copsychus** *kop-SIK-us*

Greek, *kotsyfas*, blackbird or thrush, as in *Copsychus albospectularis*, the Madagascan Magpie-Robin

**Coracina** *kor-a-SEEN-a*

*Corax*, raven, and *-ina*, small, as in *Coracina melanoptera*, the Black-headed Cuckooshrike

**Corax** *KO-raks*

Raven, as in *Corvus corax*, the Northern Raven

**Corniculata** *kor-ni-koo-LA-ta*

*Corn*, horn, and *culata*, little, piece, as in *Fratercula corniculata*, the Horned Puffin, which has a fleshy black "horn" above each eye

**Cornuta** *kor-NOO-ta*

Horned, as in *Anhima cornuta*, the Horned Screamer

**Coronata** *kor-o-NA-ta*

Crowned, as in *Setophaga coronata*, the Myrtle Warbler, with a yellow crown

**Coruscans** *KOR-us-kanz*

*Coruscus*, glittering, shining, as in *Neodrepanis coruscans*, the Common Sunbird-Asity

**Corvus** *KOR-vus*

Crow, as in *Corvus albus*, Pied Crow

**Coturnix** *ko-TUR-niks*

Quail, as in *Coturnix coturnix*, the Common Quail; the name probably derived from the bird's three short-syllable call

**Cracticus** *KRAK-ti-kus*

Greek, *kraktikos*, to shriek like a raven, as in *Cracticus mentalis*, the Black-backed Butcherbird

*Conuropsis carolinensis*,  
Carolina Parakeet





# CORVUS

The genus of about 40 species of birds commonly known as crows or ravens, *Corvus* (*Kor-vus*), is Latin for “crow.” Found almost all over the world except the polar continents and South America, the members of this genus are very adaptable and successful and perhaps the most intelligent of all birds. In the US, the American Crow, *C. brachyrhynchos*, “crow with a short bill”, is the most recognizable. In Europe it is either the Carrion Crow (*C. corone*, Latin *corvus*, crow, and Greek, *corone*, raven, hence the crow-raven) or Hooded Crow (*C. cornix*, both Latin terms meaning crow). Other birds in this genus have more descriptive names such as *C. albicollis*, the White-necked Raven.

Crows, ravens, and their relatives in the family Corvidae have gained the deserved reputation of being the smartest of the bird world. They make tools, play games, speak human words, find hidden objects, drop walnuts into road traffic so that cars expose the nuts’ innards, bait fish with bread crumbs, and even recognize individual human faces. The New Caledonian Crow, *C. moneduloides*, the most intelligent of any bird, uses tools and can make a hook (for hooking insects, fruits, or nuts from crevices), something even our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees, cannot do.

Another reason for their success is their diet. They will eat almost anything, animal or vegetable, alive or dead. This foraging habit is called



*Corvus brachyrhynchos*,  
American Crow

europyphagy (wide diet). They also have a high tolerance for human activity and are occasionally crop pests, a habit that stimulated the invention of the scarecrow some 3,000 years ago.

Ravens and crows appear frequently in mythology and folklore. There are several Native American stories about how the crow (or raven) became black after rescuing the moon, sun, and stars from an owl’s lair. In Norse mythology, two ravens roamed the world to bring information back to the king. And there is a British superstition that if ravens ever fled the Tower of London, the monarchy would

fall, so six ravens are kept there and overseen by Yeoman Warders.

Partly because of their black color, crows and ravens have often been considered bad omens, foretelling or announcing deaths and perhaps giving rise to the name “murder” for a group of crows.



*Corvus corax*,  
Northern Raven

Ravens occasionally play by repeatedly rolling down a snow-covered hill or house roof.



**Crassirostris** *kras-si-ROSS-tris*

Thick-billed, as in *Corvus crassirostris*, the Thick-billed Raven

**Creatopus** *kree-a-TOE-pus*

Greek, *creas*, flesh, and *pous*, foot, as in *Puffinus creatopus*, the Pink-footed Shearwater

**Crecca** *KREK-ka*

A Latinized word meant to express the sound of the bird, as in *Anas crecca*, the Eurasian Teal

**Crinitus** *KRIN-ih-tus*

*Crinit*, hair or bearded, probably referring to the moveable crest, as in *Myiarchus crinitus*, the Great Crested Flycatcher

**Cristata** *kris-TA-ta*

Crested, as in *Gubernatrix cristata*, the Yellow Cardinal, and *Cyanocitta cristata*, the Blue Jay

**Cristatus** *kris-TA-tus*

Crested, as in *Colinus cristatus*, the Crested Bobwhite and the Peacock, *Pavo cristatus*

**Crocethia** *krow-SETH-ee-a*

Greek, stone or pebble chaser or runner, as in *Crocethia* (now *Calidris alba*), the Sanderling, known for its habit of running back and forth at the edge of the surf

**Crotophaga** *kro-tow-FAY-ga*

Greek, *kroton*, tick, insect, and *phago*, eat, as in *Crotophaga ani*, the Smooth-billed Ani, which feeds not only on insects but on seeds and fruit

**Cuculus** *koo-KOO-lus*

A cuckoo, from the Common Cuckoo's call, as in *Cuculus canorus*

**Cunicularia** *koo-ni-koo-LAR-ee-a*

*Cunicul*, an underground passage, as in *Athene cunicularia*, the Burrowing Owl, which nests in an underground burrow, either dug itself, soil permitting, or made by a mammal

**Cuvieri**, -ii *koo-vee-AIR-eye/ee-eye*

After Georges Cuvier, a French naturalist, as in *Dryolimnas cuvieri*, the White-throated Rail

**Cyaneoviridis** *sye-an-ee-o-vi-RI-dis*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue, and *viridis*, green, as in *Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*, the Bahama Swallow

**Cyanocephalus**, -a *sye-an-o-se-FAL-us/a*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue, and *cephala*, head, as in *Euphagus cyanocephalus*, Brewer's Blackbird

**Cyanocitta** *sye-an-o-SIT-ta*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue, and Greek *kitta*, jay, as in *Cyanocitta cristata*, the Blue Jay

**Cyanocorax** *sye-an-o-KOR-aks*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue and Greek, *corax*, raven, as in *Cyanocorax chrysops*, the Plush-crested Jay

**Cyanogaster** *sye-an-o-GAS-ter*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue, and Greek, *gaster*, stomach, as in *Coracias cyanogaster*, the Blue-bellied Roller

**Cyanomelana** *sye-an-o-mel-AN-a*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue and Greek, *melas*, black, as in *Cyanoptila cyanomelana*, the Blue-and-white Flycatcher

**Cyanoptera** *sye-an-OP-ter-a*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue, and Greek, *pteron*, wing, as in *Anas cyanoptera*, the Cinnamon Teal with its blue wing patches

**Cyanoptila** *sigh-an-op-TIL-a*

*Cyaneus*, dark blue, and Greek, *pteron*, wing, as in *Cyanoptila cumatilis*, Zappey's Flycatcher

**Cygnus** *SIG-nus*

Greek, *kuknos*, swan, as in *Cygnus atratus*, the Black Swan

**Cyrtonyx** *sir-TON-iks*

Greek, *kurtos*, bent, and Latin *onyx*, claw, as in *Cyrtonyx ocellatus*, the Ocellated Quail, for the sickle-shaped claws it uses for digging

*Tachycineta cyaneoviridis*,  
Bahama Swallow



# D

## Dactylatra *dak-til-AH-tra*

Greek, *dactyl*, finger or toe, and Latin, *ater*, dark or black, as in *Sula dactylatra*, the Masked Booby, from black primary feathers.

Booby comes from the Spanish *bobo*, referring to a slow-witted person or ungainly bird

## Dactylortyx *dak-til-OR-tiks*

Greek, *dactyl*, finger or toe, and *ortyx*, quail, as in *Dactylortyx thoracicus*, the Singing Quail

## Damophila *dam-o-FIL-a*

Greek, poetess, contemporary with Sappho, as in *Damophila julie*, the Violet-bellied Hummingbird

## Daption *DAP-tee-on*

An anagram of Pintado, as in *Daption capense*, the Cape Petrel, also called the Pintado Petrel

## Daptrius *DAP-tree-us*

Greek, *daptes*, eater, to devour, as in *Daptrius ater*, the Black Caracara, a predatory bird

## Darwini, -ii *DAR-win-eye/dar-WIN-ee-eye*

After Charles Darwin, British naturalist and explorer, who famously observed the Galapagos Finches, now called Darwin's Finches, although none of them has a genus or species name *darwini* as does *Nothura darwini*, Darwin's Nothura, a type of tinamou

## Dasyornis *das-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *dasus*, hairy, shaggy, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Dasyornis brachypterus* the Eastern Bristlebird

## Davidi *DA-vi-dye*

After Andre David-Beaulieu, a naturalist in French Indo-China, as in *Arborophila davidi*, Orange-necked partridge; also after Pierre David, French priest and zoologist, as in *Strix davidi*, Pere David's Owl

## Davisoni *DAY-vi-son-eye*

After William Davison, curator of Raffles Museum in Singapore, as in *Pseudibis davisoni*, White-shouldered Ibis

## Deconychura *de-con-ih-KOO-ra*

Greek, *deca-*, ten, *onux*, claw, and *oura*, tail, as in *Deconychura longicauda*, the Long-tailed Woodcreeper; refers to the bird's ten tail feathers as "claws" that help the bird climb



*Paradisaea decora*,  
Goldie's Bird of Paradise

## Decora *dek-OR-a*

Elegant, as in *Paradisaea decora*, Goldie's Bird of Paradise, after Andrew Goldie, who discovered the bird in 1882

## Deglandi *DEG-land-eye*

After Côme Degland, French ornithologist, who published *European Ornithology* in 1849, as in *Melanitta deglandi*, the White-winged Scoter

## Delawarensis *del-a-ware-EN-siss*

After the Delaware River on the Atlantic Coast of the US, as in *Larus delawarensis*, the Ring-billed Gull that was first described there

## Deleornis *del-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *dele-*, visible, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Deleornis fraseri*, Fraser's Sunbird

## Delicata *del-ih-KA-ta*

Pleasing, alluring, as in *Gallinago delicata*, Wilson's Snipe, after Scottish-American ornithologist Alexander Wilson

## Delothraupis *del-o-THRAW-pis*

Greek, *delas*, visible, and *thraupis*, tanager, as in *Delothraupis castaneiventris*, the Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager

## Deltarhynchus *del-ta-RINK-us*

Greek, *delta*, the letter D, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Deltarhynchus flammulatus*, the Flammulated Flycatcher. The D comes from the triangular shape of the bill in cross-section as in the Greek letter Δ

**Demigretta** *dem-ee-GRET-ta*

Old French, *demi*, half or half-sized. *Demigretta* was changed to *Egretta*, as in *Egretta sacra*, the Pacific Reef Heron, which is much smaller than the Great Egret; egret comes from the old French *aigrette*, referring to feather tufts or plumes

**Dendragapus** *den-dra-GAP-us*

Greek, *dendron*, tree and *agapo*, to love, be fond of, as in *Dendragapus obscurus*, the Dusky Grouse

**Dendrexetastes** *den-dreks-eh-TAS-teez*

Greek, *dendron*, tree and *exetastes*, inspectors or examiners, as in *Dendrexetastes rufigula*, the Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper

**Dendrocincla** *den-dro-SINK-la*

Greek, *dendron*, tree, and *cincla*, circling, as in *Dendrocincla turdina*, the Plain-winged Woodcreeper, so named because of its habit of circling trees while moving up the trunk

**Dendrocitta** *den-dro-SIT-ta*

Greek, *dendron*, tree and *citta*, a jay or chattering bird, as in *Dendrocitta frontalis*, the Collared Treepie, pie from the Latin *pica*, meaning magpie

**Dendrocolaptes** *den-dro-ko-LAP-teez*

Greek, *dendron*, tree and *colaptes*, to chisel, peck out, as in *Dendrocolaptes picumnus*, the Black-banded Woodcreeper

**Dendrocopos** *den-dro-KOPE-os*

Greek, *dendron*, tree and *kopis*, to split or cleave, as in *Dendrocopos major*, the Great Spotted Woodpecker

**Dendrocygna** *den-dro-SIG-na*

Greek, *dendron*, tree and *cygn*, swan, as in *Dendrocygna bicolor*, the Fulvous Whistling Duck, which sometimes nests in trees

**Dendroica** *den-DROY-ka*

Greek, *dendron*, tree, and *oikos*, home or habitat, as in *Dendroica* (now *Setophaga*) *cerulea*, the Cerulean Warbler

**Dendronanthus** *den-dro-NAN-thus*

Greek, *dendron*, tree, and Latin, *anthus*, a flower or a lark, as in *Dendronanthus indicus*, the Forest Wagtail (see box), which resembles a lark

**Dendropicos** *den-DRO-pi-kos*

Greek, *dendron*, tree, and Spanish, *pico*, small, sharp, beak, as in *Dendropicos lugubris*, the Melancholy Woodpecker

**Dendrortyx** *den-DROR-tiks*

Greek, *dendron*, tree, and *ortyx*, quail, as in *Dendrortyx barbatus*, the Bearded Wood Partridge

**Denhami** *DEN-am-eye*

After Dixon Denham, English soldier and explorer, as in *Neotis denhami*, Denham's Bustard

**Diadema** *dye-a-DEM-a*

Greek, crown or turban, as in *Charmosyna diadema*, the probably extinct New Caledonian Lorikeet with a deep blue crown

**Diademata**, -us *dee-a-dem-AH-ta/tus*

*Diadema*, crowned, as in *Alethe diademata*, the White-tailed Alethe, which has a crest that it can raise

**Diardi** *dee-AR-dye*

After Pierre Diard, a French explorer and collector in the East Indies, as in *Lophura diardi*, Siamese Fireback

## LATIN IN ACTION

The Forest Wagtail of eastern Asia is part of the wagtail, pipit, and longclaw family, Motacillidae, but in its own genus because of some unique characteristics. Most wagtails move their tails up and down; the Forest Wagtail wags sideways. Most members of Motacillidae inhabit open areas, eat insects, and nest on the ground. The Forest Wagtail nests in trees in the forest. In Sri Lanka, the birds feed on maggots in cattle dung.

*Dendronanthus indicus*,

Forest Wagtail





# Bird Beaks

**B**eaks are a defining characteristic of birds. Since most birds use their feet predominantly for walking or perching, and wings for flying or swimming, the primary tool they use to build nests, to find, capture, and eat food, and to defend themselves is their beak, or bill. Beaks are used to court, to make sounds, and to filter water for food. Their shape is thus a reflection of the birds' lifestyle and an excellent characteristic for identification in the field. The Greek suffixes *-rhino*, *-rostrum*, and *-rhyncho* are often used in scientific names to indicate a bill's shape or color, as in the

Rhinoceros Hornbill—*Buceros* (horned) *rhinoceros* (nose horn)—and Mallard—*Anas* (duck) *platyrhynchos* (flat bill).

The bill is covered by a fibrous structural protein layer called the rhamphotheca (literally, bill case), the same protein that makes up the outer layer of human skin as well as hair and nails. The rhamphotheca grows continually to counter the wear on the bill. The tips and edges of the bill are supplied with nerve endings to allow the bird to feel what it is touching and to manipulate it. In long-billed shorebirds the tip of the bill is well supplied with sensory cells so that they can find food among sand and gravel, and the tip of the bill can open without the entire jaw opening against the substrate.

The shape of a bill is largely determined by the food needs of the bird. Flycatchers that snatch their prey in mid-air have a flattened triangle-shaped bill with a hook at the end to hold larger prey items, as does the Blue-billed Black Tyrant, *Knipolegus cyanirostris*. Nighthawks, swifts, and swallows have small bills but large mouths with sticky membranes to capture insects. Sparrows have heavy bills with palates especially designed to crack open seeds. Sunbirds and hummingbirds have long, thin, tubular bills to fit into the corolla of flowers, and birds like shoveler ducks (*Anas clypeata*, from *clypeatus*, shield, referring to the shape of the bill) have bills with lamellae that filter out food items from water or mud. The American Avocet, *Recurvirostra americana*, has a recurved bill to help it skim invertebrates from the



*Amazona guildingii*, *Aulacorhynchus prasinus*, *Rhinoplax vigil*,  
St. Vincent Amazon, Emerald Toucanet, Helmeted Hornbill

Although not the most attractive feature of some birds, the bill can be important in attracting a mate during the breeding season.



*Rynchops niger*,  
Black Skimmer

At hatching, the young Black Skimmer has equal-sized upper and lower bills, but by the time they leave the nest (fledge) the lower bill is a bit longer.

surface of the water. Toucan bills are large and long, supposedly for reaching fruits in thick vegetation, but recent research has demonstrated that they are also a thermoregulatory mechanism, using a blood supply to increase or diminish the bird's body temperature. Bills are usually distinctive, as in the Spot-billed Toucanet, *Selenidera maculirostris*, the species name referring to the spotted bill.

The Black (*Rynchops niger*), Indian (*R. albicollis*) and African Skimmers (*R. flavirostris*) have a unique bill with the lower jaw being longer than the upper one. They skim along ocean shores with their lower bill in the water and when they feel a fish, crustacean, or mollusk such as a squid, they snap their bills shut. The lower bill's ramphotheca, subject to this wear and tear, grows faster than the upper bill's. Skimmers also have the only slit-shaped pupils in the bird world, enabling them to see their bill tip.

Since beaks are the major anatomical feature determining a bird's niche, they often reduce competition, either within or between species, by being slightly different. The male bill may differ from that of the female just enough in either size or shape to enable them to eat somewhat different food items. The classic example is Darwin's finches of the Galapagos Islands. There are 13 species but only a few on each island. The set of species on each island evolved beaks that were somewhat different in size or shape than the other species to exploit the food resources on their island more effectively. And any one species will look somewhat different than its conspecific cohorts on other islands. The one with the largest bill, is, of course, *Geospiza magnirostris*, the Large Ground Finch.

So, by looking at a bird's bill, you can often deduce a lot about its lifestyle.



*Buceros rhinoceros*,  
Rhinoceros Hornbill

The male walls the female in a tree cavity by layering mud over the entrance, leaving only a small hole through which he passes food to her while she incubates the eggs.



**Diazi** *dee-AZ-eye*

After Augustin Diaz, Mexican engineer and director of the Mexican Geographical and Exploring Commission, as in *Anas diazi*, the Mexican Duck

**Dichroa** *dye-KRO-a*

Greek, *di-*, two or separate, and *chroa*, color, as in *Aplonis dichroa*, the Makira Starling, after its blue-black iridescent coloration

**Dichromanassa** *dye-kro-ma-NASS-sa*

Greek, *di-*, two, *chrom*, color, and *anassa*, queen, as in *Dichromanassa* (now *Egretta*) *rufescens*, the Reddish Egret, named for its two color phases, reddish and white

**Dichrous** *DYE-krus*

Greek, *di-*, two or separate, and *chrous*, color or complexion, as in *Pitohui dichrous*, the Hooded Pitohui, a bird that, along with a couple of close relatives, accumulates poison in its skin from eating a certain beetle

**Dichrozona** *dye-kro-ZONE-a*

Greek, *di-*, two, *chrous*, color or complexion, *zona*, a belt, girdle, zone, as in *Dichrozona cincta*, the Banded Antbird

**Dicrurus** *dy-KROO-rus*

Greek, *dicros*, forked and *ourus*, tail, as in *Dicrurus forficatus*, the Crested Drongo, drongo from the local name given to it by Madagascar natives

*Discosura conversii*,  
Green Thorntail

**Difficilis** *diff-fi-SIL-is*

Difficult, as in *Empidonax difficilis*, the Pacific Slope Flycatcher, and probably referring to the fact that *Empidonax* species are difficult to tell apart

**Diglossa** *dye-GLOS-sa*

Greek, *di-*, two, and *glossa*, tongue, as in *Diglossa humeralis*, the Black Flowerpiercer, referring to its fringed tongue

**Diglossopsis** *dye-glos-SO-pis*

Greek, two-tongued, as in *Diglossopsis cyanea*, the Masked Flowerpiercer. *Diglossopsis* is often subsumed under *Diglossa*

**Dinopium** *di-NO-pee-um*

Greek, *dinos*, terrible, whirling, and *ops*, appearance, as in *Dinopium benghalense*, the Black-rumped Flameback, the genus name apparently referring to its unusually large size for a woodpecker

**Diomedea** *dye-o-meh-DEE-a*

After Diomedes, hero of the Trojan War whose companions were turned into birds, as in *Diomedea exulans*, the Wandering Albatross

**Diophthalma** *dy-op-THAL-ma*

Greek, *di-*, two and *ophthalmos*, eye, as in *Cyclopsitta diophthalma*, the Double-cyed Fig Parrot; the cheek patches of some subspecies resemble eyespots

**Diops** *DYE-ops*

Greek, *di-*, two and *ops*, appearance, face, or eyes as in *Todiramphus diops*, the Blue-and-White Kingfisher

**Diopsittaca** *dye-op-SIT-ta-ka*

Greek, *dio*, divine, noble, and *psittaca*, parrot, as in *Diopsittaca nobilis*, the Red-shouldered Macaw

**Diphone** *dye-FO-nee*

Greek, *di-*, two, and *phone*, sound or voice, as in *Horornis diphone*, the Japanese Bush-warbler, whose beautiful voice is heard far more often than the bird is seen

**Discolor** *DIS-ko-lor*

Greek, *dis-*, separate, Latin, *color*, color, as in the different colors of *Certhia discolor*, the Sikkim Treecreeper; one population of this bird in Burma/Myanmar has a brown throat and has been considered a subspecies, though some consider it a separate species

**Discors** *DIS-korz*

Discordant, disagreeable, as in *Anas discors*, the Blue-winged Teal; *discors* might refer to its call, the noise it makes while taking off, or its face or wing patterns



**Discosura** *dis-ko-SOO-ra*

Greek, *dis-*, apart, separate, and *oura*, tail, as in *Discosura conversii*, the Green Thorntail, whose highly modified tail feathers give it its name

**Discurus** *dis-KOO-rus*

Greek, *disc*, a round plate, and *oura*, tail, as in *Prioniturus discurus*, the Blue-crowned Racket-tail

**Disjuncta** *dis-JUNK-ta*

Separate, disjunct, as in *Myrmeciza disjuncta*, the Yapacana Antbird. Yapacana an area of Venezuela. *Disjuncta* refers to the unresolved taxonomy of this bird in relation to other *Myrmeciza* species

**Dissimilis** *dis-SIM-ih-lis*

Dissimilar, as in *Turdus dissimilis*, the Black-breasted Thrush; most thrushes exhibit little or no sexual dimorphism, but *Turdus dissimilis* does

**Dixiphia** *diks-ih-FEE-a*

Greek, *di-*, two, and *xiphos*, sword, as in *Dixiphia pipra*, the White-crowned Manakin. The anatomy of its syrinx (voice box) resembles two crossed swords

**Dohertyi** *doe-ERT-ee-eye*

After William Doherty, an American collector of insects and later birds, as in *Ptilinopus dohertyi*, Red-naped Fruit Dove

**Dohrnii** *DORN-ee-eye*

After Felix Dohrn, German founder of the first zoological research station in the world, the Stazione Zoologica in Naples, Italy, as in *Glaucis dohnrui*, the Hook-billed Hermit, a type of hummingbird

**Dolei** *DOL-eye*

After Sanford Dole, a lawyer and jurist in the Hawaiian Islands, as in *Palmeria dolei*, the Akohekohe

**Dolichonyx** *doe-li-KON-iks*

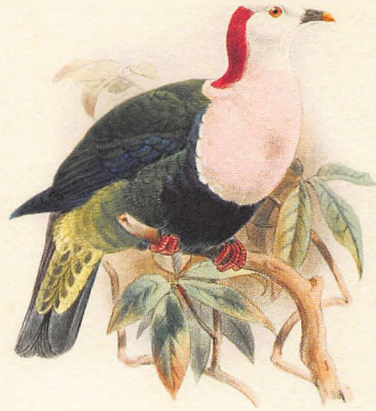
Greek, *dolichos*, long, and *onux*, claw as in *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*, the Bobolink, referring to its long claws. Bobolink derives from bob-o-lincoln, imitative of its call

**Doliornis** *doe-lee-OR-nis*

Greek, *dolio*, shrewd, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Doliornis remseni*, the Chestnut-bellied Cotinga. Probably from its secretive habits; it was not discovered until 1989

**Domesticus** *doe-MESS-ti-kus*

*Domesticus*, around the house, as in *Passer domesticus*, the House Sparrow



*Ptilinopus dohertyi*,  
Red-naped Fruit Dove

**Dominica, -cana, -canus, -censis**

*doe-MIN-ih-ka/doe-min-ih-KAN-a/kan-us*,  
*doe-min-ih-SEN-sis*

After the Commonwealth of Dominica in the West Indies, as in *Pluvialis dominica*, the American Golden Plover, which passes through the West Indies during migrations

**Donacobius** *don-a-KO-bee-us*

Greek, *donax*, a reed, and *bios*, life, living, as in *Donacobius atricapilla*, the Black-capped Donacobius, which inhabits reeds and other vegetation in wetlands of the Amazonian basin

**Donacospiza** *don-a-ko-SPY-za*

Greek, *donax*, a reed, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Donacospiza albifrons*, the Long-tailed Reed Finch

**Donaldsoni** *DON-ald-son-eye*

After Arthur Donaldson-Smith, an American traveler, African big-game hunter, and Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, as in *Caprimulgus donaldsoni*, Donaldson-Smith's Nightjar

**Dorsalis, -ae** *dor-SAL-is/ee*

*Dorsum*, back, from the back, as in *Mimus dorsalis*, the Brown-backed Mockingbird

**Dorsimaculatus** *dor-si-mak-oo-LAT-us*

*Dorsum*, back, and *macula*, spot, as in *Herpilochmus dorsimaculatus*, the Spot-backed Antwren

**Dorsomaculatus** *dor-so-mak-oo-LAT-us*

*Dorsum*, back, and *macula*, spot, as in *Ploceus dorsomaculatus*, the Yellow-capped Weaver (with a spotted back)

## LATIN IN ACTION

The antbirds, such as *Drymophila malura*, the Dusky-tailed Antbird, found in Central and South America, belong to a couple of different families with over 200 species. They do not eat ants but hunt a variety of other arthropods such as mantids, cockroaches, beetles, bees, and so forth, by hopping through the brush or snatching prey in flight. Some species follow Army Ants and as the ants dislodge arthropods or similar prey items from their hiding places, the birds pounce upon them. As these birds resemble other bird families, we find names such as antthrushes, antvireos, antshrikes, and antpittas. The birds will also crush ants and rub them through their feathers as ants' formic acid deters feather parasites.

**Dorsostriatus** *dor-so-stree-AT-us*

*Dorsums*, back, *striatus*, striated, striped, as in *Serinus dorsostriatus*, the White-bellied Canary

**Dougallii** *DOO-gal-eye*

After Peter McDougall, Scottish physician and naturalist, as in *Sterna dougallii*, the Roseate Tern

**Drepanis** *dre-PAN-is*

Greek, *drepane*, sickle, as in *Drepanis pacifica*, the now extinct Hawaii Mamo, referring to its downcurved bill

**Drepanoptila** *dre-pan-OP-til-a*

Greek, *drepane*, sickle, and *ptil-*, feather, as in *Drepanoptila holosericea*, the Cloven-feathered Dove

**Drepanorhynchus** *dre-pan-o-RINK-us*

Greek, *drepane*, sickle, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Drepanorhynchus reichenowi*, the Golden-winged Sunbird

**Dromas** *DRO-mas*

Greek, *dromas*, run, running a race, as in *Dromas ardeola*, the Crab Plover

**Dromococcyx** *dro-mo-KOK-siks*

Greek, *dromas*, run, running a race, and *coccyx*, cuckoo, as in *Dromococcyx pavoninus*, the Pavonine Cuckoo; *Pavoninus* is Latin for resembling a peacock

**Dryas** *DRY-as*

Dryad, tree or wood-nymph, as in *Catharus dryas*, the Spotted Nightingale-Thrush

**Drymocichla** *dry-mo-SICK-la*

Greek, *drymo*, woodland, forest, and *cichla*, thrush, as in *Drymocichla incana*, the Red-winged Gray Warbler

**Drymodes** *dry-MO-deez*

Greek, *drymo*, woodland, forest, as in *Drymodes brunneopygia*, the Southern Scrub Robin

**Drymophila** *dry-mo-FIL-a*

Greek, *drymo*, woodland, forest, and *philos*, like, love, as in *Drymophila malura*, the Dusky-tailed Antbird

**Drymornis** *dry-MOR-nis*

Greek, *drymo*, woodland, forest, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Drymornis bridgesii*, the Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper

**Dryolimnas** *dry-o-LIM-nas*

Greek, *drus*, tree, and Latin, *limnas*, marsh or lake, as in *Dryolimnas cuvieri*, the White-throated Rail

**Dryoscopus** *dry-o-SKO-pus*

Greek, *drus*, tree, and *skopus*, look, watcher, as in *Dryoscopus cubla*, the Black-backed Puffback, with fluffy upper tail coverts

**Dubia** *DOO-bee-a*

Doubtful, uncertain, as in *Alcippe dubia*, the Rusty-capped Fulvetta, whose taxonomic relationship is uncertain

**Dubius** *DOO-bee-us*

Doubtful, uncertain, as in *Lybius dubius*, the Bearded Barbet, so named because of early confusion as to the taxonomy of the bird

**Ducula** *doo-KOO-la*

To lead, as in *Ducula bakeri*, the Vanuatu Imperial Pigeon

**Duidae** *doo-EE-dee*

After Cerro Duida, a mountain in Venezuela, as in *Diglossa duidae*, the Scaled Flowerpiercer

**Dumetella** *doo-meh-TEL-la*

*Dumetum*, shrub, bramble, and *ella*, diminutive, as in *Dumetella carolinensis*, the Gray Catbird, which inhabits brushy areas

**Dumetia** *dum-ET-ee-a*

Shrub, bramble, as in *Dumetia hypertyra*, the Tawny-bellied Babbler

## E

Eatoni *EE-ton-eye*

After Alfred Eaton, English explorer and naturalist, as in *Anas eatoni*, Eaton's Pintail

Eburnea *ee-BUR-nee-a*

Eburne, ivory, as in *Pagophila eburnea*, the Ivory Gull

Ecaudatus *eh-kaw-DA-tus*

E-, without, and *caudata*, tail, as in *Myiornis ecaudatus*, the Short-tailed Pygmy Tyrant, with a stub of a tail; it is also the smallest passerine (songbird) in the world

Ectopistes *ek-toe-PIS-teez*

Greek, *ectopistes*, wanderer, as in *Ectopistes migratorius*, the extinct Passenger Pigeon, the common name coming from French settlers who called the bird "Pigeon de passage," pigeon of passage

Edwardsi *ED-wards-eye*

Probably after George Edwards, an English naturalist and ornithologist, the "father of British ornithology," as in *Bangsia edwardsi*, the Moss-backed Tanager

Edwardsii *ed-WARDS-ee-eye*

After Alphonse Milne-Edwards, a renowned French naturalist, as in *Carpodacus edwardsii*, the Dark-rumped Rosefinch

Egertoni *EJ-er-ton-eye*

After Sir Philip Egerton, an English paleontologist and member of the House of Commons, as in *Actinodura egertoni*, the Rusty-fronted Barwing

Egria *ee-GREE-gee-a*

*Egria*, distinguished, as in *Crex egria*, the African Crake. The species name may refer to its upright distinguished posture and crake after its call

Egretta *ee-GRET-ta*

Old French, *aigrette*, a kind of heron, as in *Egretta vinaceigula*, the Slaty Egret. There is no biological difference between herons and egrets

Eichhorni *IKE-horn-eye*

After Alfred Eichhorn, an Australian farmer, as in *Philemon eichhorni*, the New Ireland Friarbird

Eisentrauti *EY-zen-trout-eye*

After Martin Eisentraut, German zoologist and collector, as in *Melignomon eisentrauti*, the Yellow-footed Honeyguide

Elachus *ee-LAK-us*

Greek, *elach*, small, as in *Dendropicos elachus*, the Little Gray Woodpecker

Elaenia *eh-LEEN-ee-a*

Greek, *elaeo*, olive, olive oil, as in *Elaenia parvirostris*, the Small-billed Elaenia, a tyrant flycatcher

Elanoides *el-a-NOY-deez*

*Elanus*, kite, and Greek, *eidos*, like, resemble, as in *Elanoides forficatus*, the Swallow-tailed Kite

Elanus *eh-LAN-us*

*Elanus*, kite, as in *Elanus leucurus*, the White-tailed Kite, whose common name derives from the string-held toy

Elaphrus *ee-LAF-rus*

Greek, *elaphros*, light in weight, as in *Aerodramus elaphrus*, the Seychelles Swiftlet

Elata, -us *ee-LAY-ta/tus*

*Elat*, high, lofty, as in *Ceratogymna elata*, the Yellow-casqued Hornbill

*Ectopistes migratorius*,  
Passenger Pigeon





**Electron** *ee-LEK-tron*

Greek, *electr-*, amber, electricity, as in *Electron platyrhynchum*, the Broad-billed Motmot; refers to the color of the head and chest, while Motmot derives from the call

**Elegans** *EL-le-ganz*

*Elegantem*, choice, fine, tasteful, as in *Pitta elegans*, the Elegant Pitta, and about 20 other species' names

**Elegantissima** *eh-le-gan-TISS-see-ma*

Very elegant, as in *Euphonia elegantissima*, the Elegant or Blue-headed Euphonia

**Eleonora** *el-lee-o-NOR-ee*

After Eleanor of Arborea, national heroine of Sardinia, as in *Falco eleonora*, Eleonora's Falcon

**Elliotti**, -ii *EL-lee-ot-eye/el-lee-OT-ee-eye*

After Daniel Elliot, Curator of Zoology at the Field Museum in Chicago, as in *Syrnaticus ellioti*, Elliot's Pheasant

**Elsayornis** *el-see-OR-nis*

After Joseph Elsey, English surgeon, explorer, and naturalist, and Greek, *ornis*, bird, as in *Elsayornis melanops*, the Black-fronted Dotterel, *dotterel* from Middle English, meaning stupid, silly

**Emberiza** *em-be-RYE-za*

Swiss-German, *emmeritz*, bunting, as in *Emberiza cia*, the Rock Bunting; there is no clear etymology for bunting

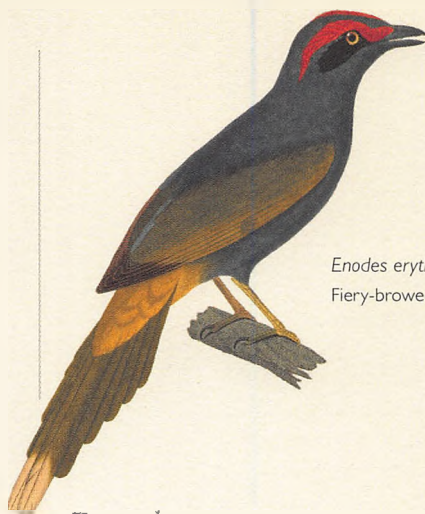
**Emberizoides** *em-ber-ib-ZOY-deez*

Swiss-German, *emmeritz*, bunting, and Greek, *oid*, like, resembling, as in *Emberizoides ypiranganus*, the Lesser Grass Finch

**Emblema** *em-BLEM-a*

Inlaid ornamental work, as in *Emblema pictum*, the Painted Finch

*Pitta elegans*,  
Elegant Pitta



*Enodes erythrophris*,  
Fiery-browed Starling

**Empidonax** *em-pi-DON-aks*

Greek, *empis*, gnat, mosquito, and *anax*, king, as in *Empidonax flaviventris*, the Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. There are about 15 *Empidonax* species, many of which are difficult to tell apart, often called "empids" by birdwatchers

**Empidonomus** *em-pi-DON-o-mus*

Greek, *empis*, gnat, mosquito, and *nomas*, grazing, as in *Empidonomus varius*, the Variegated Flycatcher

**Empidonis** *em-pi-DOR-nis*

Greek, *empis*, gnat, mosquito, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Empidonis semipartitus*, the Silverbird

**Endomychura** *en-do-my-KOO-ra*

Greek, *endo*, inner, *mycho*, inward, and *oura*, tail, as in *Endomychura* (now *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*, the Guadalupe Murrelet, alluding to the very short tail

**Enganensis** *en-ga-NEN-sis*

After Enggano Island, Indonesia, as in *Otus enganensis*, the Enggano Scops Owl

**Enigma** *eh-NIG-ma*

Puzzle, mystery, as in *Todiramphus enigma*, the Talaud Kingfisher, of the Talaud Islands, Indonesia

**Enodes** *ee-NO-deez*

Smooth, as in *Enodes erythrophris*, the Fiery-browed Starling, with very smooth plumage

**Ensifera** *en-si-FER-a*

*Ensi*, sword, and *fer*, to bear, as in *Ensifera ensifera*, the Sword-billed Hummingbird

**Ensipennis** *en-si-PEN-nis*

*Ensi*, sword, and *pennis*, feather, wing, as in *Campylopterus ensipennis*, the White-tailed Sabrewing

**Entomodestes** *en-toe-mo-DES-teez*

Greek, *entomo*, insect, and *edest*, eater, as in *Entomodestes coracinus*, the Black Solitaire

**Enucleator** *ee-noo-lee-AH-tor*

*E-*, without, and *nucleator*, nucleus or seed, as in *Pinicola enucleator*, the Pine Grosbeak, which extracts seeds from pine cones

**Eolophus** *ee-o-LO-fus*

Greek, *eo*, dawn, early, and Latin, *lophus*, crest, as in *Eolophus roseicapilla*, the Galah; galah is derogatory Australian slang, meaning fool or idiot

**Eophona** *ee-o-FONE-a*

Greek, *eo*, dawn, early, and *phon*, sound, voice, as in *Eophona personata*, the Japanese Grosbeak

**Eopsaltria** *ee-op-SAL-tree-a*

Greek, *eo*, dawn, early, and *psalter*, female lyre player, as in *Eopsaltria australis*, the Eastern Yellow Robin

**Eos** *EE-os*

Greek, *eo*, dawn, early, as in *Eos histrio*, the Red-and-blue Lory; apparently refers to both the bright red plumage and eastern Indonesia distribution (*Eos* in reference to the sun rising in the east)

**Epauletta** *eh-paw-LET-ta*

French, *epaulette*, shoulder ornament, as in *Pyrhophlectes epauletta*, the Golden-naped Finch

**Epichlorus** *eh-pi-KLOR-us*

Greek, *epi-*, on, over, and *chloro-*, green, as in *Urolais epichlorus*, the Green Longtail

**Epimachus** *ep-ih-MAK-us*

Greek, *epimachos*, ready for battle, as in *Epimachus meyeri*, the Brown Sicklebill

**Episcopus** *eh-PIS-ko-pus*

*Episcopus*, an overseer or bishop, as in *Ciconia episcopus*, the Woolly-necked Stork or Bishop Stork, because it resembles a religious entity with its white collar

**Epops** *EE-pops*

Greek, *epops*, hoopoe, as in *Upupa epops*, the Eurasian Hoopoe; the common name comes from its call

**Epulata** *eh-poo-LAT-a*

*Epul*, feast, and *ata*, full, as in *Muscicapa epulata*, the Little Gray Flycatcher

**Eques** *EH-kweez*

A horseman, knight, as in *Myzomela eques*, the Ruby-throated Myzomela

**Erckelii** *er-KEL-ee-eye*

After Theodor Erckel, a German taxidermist, as in *Pternistis erckelii*, Erckel's Francolin

**Eremalauda** *eh-rem-a-LAW-da*

Greek, *eremos*, a lonely place, and Latin, *alauda*, lark, as in *Eremalauda dunni*, Dunn's Lark, often found in remote desert areas

**Eremiornis** *eh-rem-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *eremos*, a lonely place, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Eremiornis* (now *Megalurus*) *carteri*, the Spinifexbird, *Spinifex* being a genus of grasses in which the bird nests

*Upupa epops*,

Eurasian Hoopoe



## Eremita *eh-ri-MIT-a*

*Eremita*, hermit, as in *Geronticus eremita*, the Northern Bald Ibis or Hermit Ibis

## Eremomela *eh-rem-o-MEL-a*

Greek, *eremos*, a lonely place, and *melo*, song, as in *Eremomela pusilla*, the Senegal Eremomela

## Eremophila *eh-re-mo-FIL-a*

Greek, *eremos*, a lonely place, and *philia*, love, as in *Eremophila alpestris*, the Horned or Shore Lark

## Ereunetes *eh-re-un-EET-eez*

Greek, *ereunetes*, prober, as in *Ereunetes* (now *Calidris*) *pusilla*, the Semipalmated Sandpiper, which probes for invertebrates on the streamside and whose toes are only partially webbed

## Erithacus *eh-ri-THAK-us*

Robin, as in *Erithacus rubecula*, the European Robin



## Erlangeri *er-LAN-ger-eye*

After Carol von Erlanger, German collector, as in *Calandrella erlangeri*, Erlanger's Lark

## Erolia *eh-ROL-ee-a*

From *erolie*, a word made up by French ornithologist Vieillot, definition unclear, as in *Erolia* (now *Calidris*) *maritima*, the Purple Sandpiper

## Erythrauchen *eh-ri-THRAW-ken*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *auchen*, the neck, throat, as in *Accipiter erythrauchen*, the Rufous-necked Sparrowhawk

## Erythrinus *eh-ri-THRY-nus*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and Latin *-inus*, pertaining to, as in *Carpodacus erythrinus*, the Common Rosefinch

## Erythrocephala, -us *eh-rith-ro-se-FAL-a/us*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Myzomela erythrocephala*, the Red-headed Myzomela

## Erythrocerum, -us *eh-rith-ro-SIR-kum/kus*

Greek, *erythros*, red and *cervo*, tail, as in *Philydor erythrocerum*, the Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner

## Erythrochlamys *eh-rith-ro-KLAM-is*

Greek, *erythros*, red, *chlamys*, cloak, as in *Calendulauda erythrochlamys*, the Dune Lark; some races have a rufous wash to the upper parts

## Erythrocnemis *eh-rith-rok-NEM-is*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *kneme*, leg, as in *Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*, the Black-necked Scimitar Babbler, with rusty-colored thigh feathers

## Erythrogaster, -trus *eh-rith-ro-GAS-ter/trus*

Greek, *erythros*, red, *gaster*, belly, as in *Laniarius erythrogaster*, the Black-headed Gonolek, with a bright chest and abdomen

## Erythrogenys *eh-rith-ro-JEN-is*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *genys*, jaw, as in *Psittacana erythrogenys*, the Red-masked Parakeet

## Erythrogonyx *eh-rith-ro-GON-is*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *gony*, knee, as in *Erythrogonyx cinctus*, the Red-kneed Dotterel

*Pomatorhinus erythrocnemis*,  
Black-necked Scimitar Babbler



# ERITHACUS

There are many birds called robins—bush-robins, forest-robins, magpie-robins, and thrushes like the American Robin, *Turdus migratorius*, and Rufous-collared Robin, *T. rufoitorques*, most with the familiar red breast, and the Flame Robin, *Petroica phoenicea*. But unlike *E. rubecula*, the European Robin, they are not actually in the genus *Erithacus* (*eh-ri-THAK-us*), a Latin word meaning robin and presumably referring to the European Robin. Once thought to be a thrush, it is now considered an Old World Flycatcher, specifically a chat. There are several myths and folktales explaining the red breast. One says it came from the blood of Christ when the bird pulled a thorn out of his crown. Another says that the bird saved a father and son on a cold night by fanning the flames of a fire with its wings. The bird's breast is orange-colored rather than red, but orange was not a known color until the sixteenth century.

The name robin comes from the fifteenth century and perhaps earlier, shortened from Robin Redbreast or Robin Goodfellow, but it was not applied to the European songbird until the mid-eighteenth century. Today the name applies to people, airplanes, ships, and fictional characters. There are only three species in the genus *Erithacus*, the other two being *E. akahige*, the Japanese Robin, and *E. komadori*, the Ryukyu Robin.

The European Robin ranges from northern Scandinavia to northern Africa; there are different populations that vary somewhat in coloration and are considered subspecies. The most different is the



*Erithacus rubecula*,  
European Robin

Canary Islands Robin, which has a white eye ring that the European population does not possess.

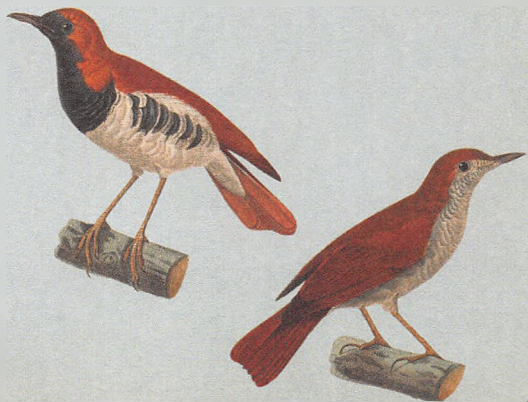
The Japanese Robin, *E. akahige*, is found in China, Japan, Korea, Thailand,

Vietnam, and Russia, and has an orange head rather than breast, and the Ryukyu Robin, *E. komadori*, with an orange crown, nape, back, and tail, is restricted to the Nansei Shoto archipelago of Japan.

All the *Erithacus* birds are woodland species, although the European Robin is common in British gardens where it follows gardeners tilling the soil in search of invertebrates. Being small birds these robins have a high mortality rate, especially when young, and have an average life span of just over one year.

*Erithacus komadori*,  
Ryukyu Robin

The Ryukyu Robin is found only in the Nansei Shoto archipelago between southern Japan and Taiwan, sometimes called the Galapagos of the Western Pacific.





*Myzomela erythromelas*,  
Black-bellied Myzomela

## Erythroleuca *eh-rith-ro-LOY-ka*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *leuca*, white, as in *Grallaria erythroleuca*, the Red-and-white Antpitta

## Erythrolophus *eh-rith-ro-LO-fus*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *lophus*, crest, as in *Tauraco erythrolophus*, the Red-crested Turaco

## Erythromelas *eh-rith-ro-MEL-as*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *melas*, black, as in *Myzomela erythromelas*, the Black-bellied Myzomela, with a red head

## Erythronotos, -us, -a *eh-rith-ro-NO-tos/tus/ta*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *noto*, back or south, as in *Estrilda erythronotos*, the Black-faced Waxbill. The species name is a misnomer as it is the lower abdomen and rump that are reddish

## Erythrophthalma, -us *eh-rith-ro-THAL-ma/mus*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *ophthalmos*, the eye, as in *Netta erythrophthalma*, the Southern Pochard; males have red eyes

## Erythropleura *eh-rith-ro-PLUR-a*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *pleura*, side, ribs, as in *Ptiloprora erythropleura*, the Rufous-sided Honeyeater

## Erythrops *eh-RI-throps*

Greek, *erythros*, red and *ops*, the face, as in *Quelea erythrops*, the Red-headed Quelea

## Erythroptera *eh-rith-ROP-ter-a*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Prinia erythroptera*, the Red-winged Prinia

## Erythropus *eh-rith-RO-pus*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *pous*, foot, as in *Accipiter erythropus*, the Red-thighed Sparrowhawk

## Erythropygia, -us *eh-rith-ro-PIH-jee-a/us*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *puge*, rump, as in *Sturnia erythropygia*, the White-headed Starling

## Erythrorhyncha, -chos *eh-rith-ro-RIN-ka/kos*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Anas erythrorhyncha*, the Red-billed Teal

## Erythrothorax *eh-rith-ro-THOR-aks*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *thorax*, breast, as in *Dicaeum erythrothorax*, the Flame-breasted Flowerpecker

## Erythrura, -us *eh-rith-ROO-ra/rus*

Greek, *erythros*, red, and *oura*, tail, as in *Erythrura viridifacies*, the Green-faced Parrotfinch

## Estrilda *es-TRIL-da*

Derivation perhaps from the German *Wellenastrild*, the Waxbill, as in *Estrilda atricapilla*, the Black-headed Waxbill

## Euchlorus *you-KLOR-us*

Greek *eu*, well or good, and *chlor-o*, green, as in *Passer euchlorus*, the Arabian Golden Sparrow (yellow with a greenish hue)

## Eudocimus *you-DOE-si-mus*

Greek *eu*, well or good, and *docimus*, excellent, of good repute, as in *Eudocimus albus*, the American White Ibis, with a stately appearance

## Eudromia *you-DROM-ee-a*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *dromos*, running, a race, as in *Eudromia elegans*, the Elegant Crested Tinamou, a good runner and poor flier

## Eudynamys *you-DY-na-mus*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *dynam*, power, energy, as in *Eudynamys scolopaceus*, the Asian Koel; Koel is onomatopoeic

## Eugenes *you-JEN-eez*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *genos*, birth, as in *Eugenes fulgens*, the Magnificent Hummingbird; refers to its size and magnificent coloration

**Eugralla** *you-GRAL-la*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and Latin, *gralla*, stilts, as in *Eugralla paradoxa*, the Ochre-flanked Tapaculo, with long legs

**Eulabeornis** *you-la-be-OR-nis*

Greek, *eulab*, wary, cautious, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Eulabeornis castaneiventris*, the Chestnut Rail

**Euleri** *YOU-ler-eye*

After Carl Euler, Swiss Counsel in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, as in *Coccyzus euleri*, the Pearly-breasted Cuckoo

**Eulophotes** *you-lo-FOE-teez*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and Latin, *lophus*, crest, as in *Egretta eulophotes*, the Chinese Egret

**Eumyias** *you-MY-yas*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *muia*, fly, as in *Eumyias indigo*, the Indigo Flycatcher

**Euodice** *you-O-di-see*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *odi*, song, as in *Euodice cantans*, the African Silverbell

**Euphagus** *you-FAY-gus*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *phagein*, to eat, as in *Euphagus cyanocephalus*, Brewer's Blackbird, an omnivore

**Eupherusa** *you-fer-OO-sa*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *pher*, to bear, as in *Eupherusa nigriventris*, the Black-bellied Hummingbird, most likely in reference to its bearing or posture

**Euphonia** *you-FONE-ee-a*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *phon*, sound or voice, as in *Euphonia plumbea*, the Plumbeous Euphonia

**Euplectes** *you-PLEK-teez*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *plectos*, twisted or braided, as in *Euplectes afer*, the Yellow-crowned Bishop; the genus name refers to the bird's complex braided nest construction

**Eupoda** *you-PO-da*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, and *pous*, foot, as in *Eupoda* (now *Charadrius*) *montanus*, the Mountain Plover

**Euptilotis** *youp-til-O-tis*

Greek, *eu*, well or good, *ptilon*, feather, and *otis*, ear, as in *Euptilotis neoxenus*, the Eared Quetzal

**Eurocephalus** *you-ro-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *euro*, broad, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Eurocephalus rueppelli*, the White-rumped Shrike, with a large head characteristic of shrikes

**Europaea** *you-ro-PEE-a*

Europe, as in *Sitta europaea*, the Eurasian Nuthatch

**Euryceros** *you-ri-SIR-os*

Greek, *euro*, broad, and *cera*, horn, as in *Euryceros prevostii*, the Helmet Vanga

**Eurylaimus** *you-ri-LIE-mus*

Greek, *euro*, broad, and *laimos*, throat, as in *Eurylaimus javanicus*, the Banded Broadbill

**Eurynorhynchus** *you-ri-no-RINK-us*

Greek, *euryno*, widen, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Eurynorhynchus pygmeus*, the Spoon-billed Sandpiper

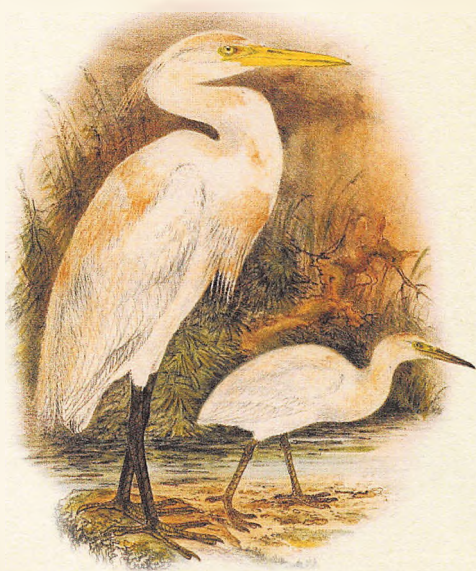
**Euryptila** *you-rip-TIL-a*

Greek, *euro*, broad, and *ptila*, feather, as in *Euryptila subcinnamomea*, the Cinnamon-breasted Warbler

**Eurypyga** *you-ri-PI-ga*

Greek, *euro*, broad, and *puge*, rump, as in *Eurypyga belias*, the Sunbittern

*Egretta eulophotes*,  
Chinese Egret





## LATIN IN ACTION

Newton's Parakeet is extinct. In 1872 a female was collected and two years later a male; these are the specimens from which the species was described and are the only ones in existence. The parakeet once inhabited the small island of Rodrigues, part of the Republic of Mauritius and located in the Indian Ocean about 350 kilometers east of Mauritius. Small islands are biologically fragile and extinction rates are much higher than on larger islands, but all islands are more ecologically unstable than the mainland. Perhaps the most famous island extinction is that of the Dodo, *Raphus cucullatus*, on Mauritius in 1690. Another parakeet, the Echo Parakeet, *Psittacula eques*, was represented by only three pairs in the 1980s; today, there are around 500. Lifting endemic species such as the Mauritius Kestrel, *Falco punctatus*, Pink Pigeon, *Nesoenas mayeri*, Rodrigues Warbler, *Acrocephalus rodericanus*, Rodrigues Fody, *Foudia flavicans*, and Echo Parakeet from the brink of extinction, Mauritius became the most successful country in the world at saving endangered species.



*Psittacula exsul*,  
Newton's Parakeet

## Eurystomus *you-ri-STO-mus*

Greek, *euro*, broad, and *stomus*, mouth, as in *Eurystomus orientalis*, the Oriental Dollarbird, which has a broad bill

## Everetti *EV-ver-et-tye*

After Alfred Everett, a British administrator and collector in the East Indies, as in *Rhyticeros everetti*, Sumba Hornbill

## Eversmanni *EH-verz-man-nye*

After Alexander Eversmann, a Russian lepidopterist, as in *Columba eversmanni*, Yellow-eyed Pigeon

## Ewingii *you-WING-ee-eye*

After Thomas Ewing, Australian teacher, naturalist, and collector, as in *Acanthiza ewingii*, the Tasmanian Thornbill

## Excalfactoria *eks-kal-fak-TOR-ee-a*

*Ex*, out of, *cal*, heat, and *factoria*, place of production, because Chinese used these birds as hand-warmers, as in *Excalfactoria chinensis*, the King Quail

## Excubitor *eks-KOO-bi-tor*

Sentinel, watchman, from *excubare*, out of doors, as in *Lanius excubitor*, the Northern or Great Gray Shrike, well known for watching from high vantage points

## Exilis *eks-IL-is*

Small, delicate, as in *Psaltia exilis*, the Pygmy Bushitit

## Eximia, -us, -um *ex-IM-ee-a/us/um*

Exceptional or uncommon, as in *Buthraupis eximia*, the Black-chested Mountain Tanager

## Explorator *eks-PLOR-at-or*

Explorer, investigator, as in *Zosterops explorator*, the Fiji White-eye

## Exsul *EKS-ool*

*Exsula*, stranger, exile, as in *Psittacula exsul*, the extinct Newton's Parakeet, endemic to the island of Rodrigues, Indian Ocean

## Externa *eks-TURN-a*

Outside, external, as in *Pterodroma externa*, the Juan Fernandez Petrel. This bird breeds only on an island off the coast of Chile

## Exustus *eks-US-tus*

*Exust*, burned up, consumed, as in *Pterocles exustus*, the Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse; may refer to the fact that this bird lives in very hot dry environments

## F

**Fabalis** *fa-BAL-is*

*Faba*, bean, as in *Anser fabalis*, the Taiga Bean Goose, the common name probably from its habit of grazing in bean fields

**Falcata**, -us *fal-KA-ta/tus*

*Falcis*, sickle, as in *Anas falcata*, the Falcated Duck, with its sickle-shaped tertiary feathers

**Falcinellus** *fal-sin-EL-lus*

*Falcis*, sickle, as in *Limicola falcinellus*, the Broad-billed Sandpiper, perhaps for its downcurved bill tip

**Falcipennis** *fal-si-PEN-nis*

*Falcis*, sickle, and *penna*, feather, as in *Falcipennis falcipennis*, the Siberian Grouse, from its swept-back wings in flight

**Falcirostris** *fal-si-ROSS-tris*

*Falcis*, sickle, and *rostris*, beak, bill, as in *Sporophila falcirostris*, Temminck's Seedeater

**Falco** *FAL-ko*

Curved blade, sickle, as in *Falco concolor*, the Sooty Falcon, with a hooked beak

**Falcularius** *fal-koo-LAR-ee-us*

*Falcis*, sickle, and *-arius*, pertaining to, as in *Campylorhynchus falcularius*, the Black-billed Scythebill

**Falcula** *fal-KOOL-ee-a*

*Falcis*, sickle, as in *Falcula palliata*, the Sickle-billed Vanga

**Falkensteini** *FAL-ken-stine-eye*

After Johann Falkenstein, German surgeon and collector, as in *Chlorocichla falkensteini*, Falkenstein's Greenbul

**Falklandicus** *falk-LAND-ih-kus*

After the Falkland Islands, as in *Charadrius falklandicus*, the Two-banded Plover

**Fallax** *FAL-laks*

*Fallax*, deceptive, as in *Leucippus fallax*, the Buffy Hummingbird, deceptive probably because of its unusually dull color for a hummingbird



*Sporophila falcirostris*,  
Temminck's Seedeater

**Familiaris**, -e *fa-mil-ee-AR-is/-ee*

*Familia*, family, household, as in *Certhia familiaris*, the Eurasian Treecreeper

**Famosa** *fam-OS-a*

*Fama*, reputation, tradition, as in *Nectarinia famosa*, the Malachite Sunbird

**Fanny**, -i *FAN-nee/neye*

After Francis "Fanny" Wilson, wife of collector Edward Wilson, as in *Myrtis fannyi*, the Purple-collared Woodstar

**Fasciata**, -us *fas-ehe-AH-ta/tus*

Banded, as in *Atticora fasciata*, the White-banded Swallow

**Fasciatoventris** *fas-see-a-toe-VEN-tris*

*Fascia*, band, and *ventris*, belly, as in *Pheugopedius fasciatoventris*, the Black-bellied Wren

**Fasciicauda** *fas-see-eye-KAW-da*

*Fascia*, band, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Pipra fasciicauda*, the Band-tailed Manakin

**Fasciinucha** *fas-see-eye-NOO-ka*

*Fascia*, band, and *nucha*, nape, as in *Falco fasciinucha*, the Taita Falcon, of the Taita Hills of Kenya

# FALCO

There are 37 species of birds comprising the genus *Falco* (*Fal-ko*), the falcons, from the Latin *falx*, curved blade, sickle. They may be so named for their talons, their curved beak, or the shape of their outspread wings. While hawks and falcons share some features, they are in different families: hawks and eagles are in Accipitridae and falcons in Falconidae. Falcons differ from hawks in that they are often smaller, with longer, thinner wings, and a tooth-like notch on the bill. Falcons typically catch their prey in mid-air while hawks tend to snatch up their food items from the ground. The Peregrine Falcon (*F. peregrinus*, Latin for wanderer) is reputed to be able to exceed 185 miles (300 kilometers) per hour in a dive. Falcons are widely distributed, but the Peregrine is the most widespread, found almost everywhere between the polar regions except high mountains, deserts, and tropical areas. The Barbary Falcon, looking a lot like the Peregrine, is named *F. peregrinoides*, Latin *pelegrinus*, meaning Peregrine Falcon, and the Greek suffix *-oides*, meaning resembling.

Kestrels are another *Falco* subgroup. They are smaller than the peregrine group, and, unlike most falcons, sexually dimorphic. Relatively colorful, they tend to hover and dive on their bird or mammal prey rather than catch it mid-air.



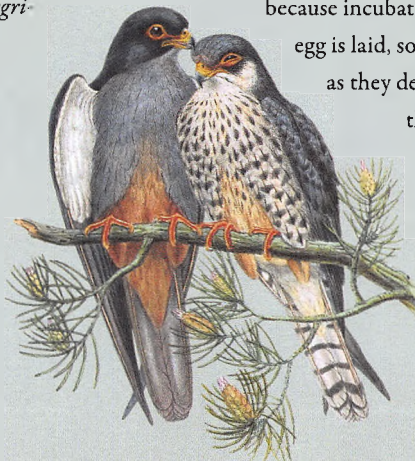
*Falco peregrinus*,  
Peregrine Falcon

Kestrel comes from the French *crêcerelle*, rattle, apparently from their call. The American Kestrel (*F. sparverius*, Latin for sparrowhawk) ranges throughout the Americas from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.

Then there are the hobbies, between the peregrine group and kestrels in size and dark gray in color. More aerial than the kestrels, they take small birds and large insects in

flight. The Eurasian Hobby is found throughout that region. Its scientific designation is *F. subbuteo* (Latin *sub*, near to, and *buteo*, buzzard) and hobby comes from the Old French *hobet*, meaning falcon and referring to its flight—up and down (like a hobby horse).

As with most raptors (a bird of prey, such as hawks and owls) females are usually larger than the males. They lay eggs that hatch asynchronously because incubation usually begins after the first egg is laid, so the chicks are of different sizes as they develop. In times of food scarcity, the first-born chicks survive because they are bigger and better at begging for food.



*Falco amurensis*,  
Amur Falcon

The Amur Falcon has a round-trip migratory journey of 14,000 miles from southern Africa to Asia each year.



**Fasciiventer** *fas-see-eye-VEN-ter*

*Fascia*, band, and *ventris*, belly, as in *Melaniparus fasciiventer*, the Stripe-breasted Tit

**Fasciogularis** *fas-see-o-goo-LAR-is*

*Fascia*, band, and *gularis*, throat, as in *Gavialis fasciogularis*, the Mangrove Honeyeater

**Fasciolata**, -us *fas-see-o-LAT-a/us*

*Fasciat-*, banded, as in *Crax fasciolata*, the Bare-faced Curassow

**Fastuosa** *fas-to-O-sa*

*Fastuosus*, proud, haughty, as in *Tangara fastuosa*, the Seven-colored Tanager, aptly named for its spectacular plumage

**Feae** *FAY-ee*

After Leonardo Fea, Italian naturalist, as in *Turdus feae*, the Gray-sided Thrush

**Featherstoni** *FE-ther-stone-eye*

After Earl Featherston, a superintendent of the province of Wellington, New Zealand, as in *Phalacrocorax featherstoni*, the Pitt Shag or Featherstone's Shag

**Fedoa** *fe-DOE-a*

After an old name for the godwit, as in *Limosa fedoa*, the Marbled Godwit

**Felix** *FEE-likes*

Happy, blessed, fertile, as in *Pheugopedius felix*, the Happy Wren, probably from its song

**Femoralis** *fe-mor-AH-lis*

*Femur*, thigh, as in *Falco femoralis*, the Aplomado Falcon, with reddish thighs, distinct from the rest of its plumage

**Ferina** *fe-REEN-a*

Game, flesh of wild animals, as in *Aythya ferina*, the Common Pochard, probably so named because it once was commonly eaten

**Ferminia** *fair-MIN-ee-a*

After Fermin Cervera, Spanish soldier and naturalist, as in *Ferminia cerverai*, the Zapata Wren

**Fernandensis** *fer-nan-DEN-sis*

After the Juan Fernández Islands off Chile, as in *Sephanoides fernandensis*, the Juan Fernandez Firecrown

**Ferox** *FER-oks*

Fierce, as in *Myiarchus ferox*, the Short-crested Flycatcher

**Ferrcorostris** *fer-ree-o-ROSS-tris*

*Ferro*, iron, and *rostris*, bill, as in *Carpodacus ferrostris*, the Bonin Grosbeak

**Ferreus** *FER-ree-us*

*Ferro*, iron, as in *Saxicola ferreus*, the Gray Bush Chat; refers to the male bird's iron-colored plumage

**Ferruginea**, -us *fer-roo-JIN-ee-a/us*

Rust-colored, as in *Muscicapa ferruginea*, the Ferruginous Flycatcher

**Ferrugineifrons** *fer-roo-jin-ee-EYE-fronz*

*Ferrugineus*, rust-colored, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Bolborhynchus ferrugineifrons*, the Rufous-fronted Parakeet

**Ferrugineipectus** *fer-roo-jin-ee-eye-PEK-tus*

*Ferrugineus*, rust-colored, and *pectus*, breast, as in *Grallaria ferrugineipectus*, the Rusty-breasted Antpitta

**Ferrugineiventre** *fer-roo-jin-ee-eye-VEN-tree*

*Ferrugineus*, rust-colored, and *ventr*, belly, as in *Conirostrum ferrugineiventre*, the White-browed Conebill

**Festiva** *fes-TEE-va*

Festive, holiday mood, as in *Amazona festiva*, the Festive Amazon

**Ficedula** *fee-se-DOO-la*

Small bird, fig-pecker, as in *Ficedula hypoleuca*, the European Pied Flycatcher

*Pheugopedius felix*,  
Happy Wren





*Coracina fimbriata*,  
Lesser Cuckooshrike

## Figulus *fi-GOO-lus*

Potter, earthenware maker, from *figere*, transform, as in *Furnarius figulus*, the Band-tailed Hornero, that builds oven-shaped nests. Hornero comes from the Spanish *horno*, meaning oven

## Filicauda *fi-li-KAW-da*

*Fili*, thread, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Pipra filicauda*, the Wire-tailed Manakin

## Fimbriata, -um *fim-bree-AH-ta/tum*

*Fimbri*-, fringe, fibers, as in *Coracina fimbriata*, the Lesser Cuckooshrike, with white fringes on its flight feathers

## Finschi, -ii *FINCH-eye/ee-eye*

After Friedrich Finsch, a German ethnographer and naturalist, as in *Scleroptila finschi*, Finsch's Francolin

## Fischeri *FISH-er-eye*

After Gustav Fischer, German explorer, as in *Agapornis fischeri*, Fischer's Lovebird

## Fistulator *fiss-too-LA-tor*

*Fistulare*, one who plays the reed-pipe, as in *Ceratogymna* (now *Bycanistes*) *fistulator*, the Piping Hornbill, probably describing its call

## Flabelliformis *fla-bel-li-FORM-is*

*Flabellum*, small fan, and *form*-, shape, as in *Cacomantis flabelliformis*, the Fan-tailed Cuckoo

## Flagrans *FLAY-granz*

Burning, blazing, fiery, as in *Aethopyga flagrans*, the Flaming Sunbird

## Flammea, -us, -olus

*FLAM-me-a/us/FLAM-me-o-lus*

*Flamme*-, flame-colored, as in *Acanthis flammea*, the Common Redpoll

## Flammiceps *FLAM-mi-seps*

*Flammeus*, flame-colored, and *ceps*, head, as in *Cephalopyrus flammiceps*, the Fire-capped Tit; *flammiceps* redundant as *Cephalopyrus* also means flame-colored head

## Flammigerus *flam-mi-JER-us*

*Flammeus*, flame-colored, and *gero*-, to carry, bear, as in *Ramphocelus flammigerus*, the Flame-rumped Tanager

## Flammulatus, -a *flam-moo-LA-tus/ta*

Little flame, as in *Megabyas flammulatus*, the African Shrike-flycatcher

## Flava *FLA-va*

*Flavus*, yellow, as in *Motacilla flava*, the Western Yellow Wagtail

## Flavala *fla-VAL-a*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *ala*, wing, as in *Hemixos flavala*, the Ashy Bulbul

## Flaveola, -lus *flav-ee-O-la/lus*

*Flavus*, yellow, as in *Coereba flaveola*, the Bananaquit



*Acanthis flammea*,  
Common Redpoll

## Flavescens *FLAV-es-senz*

*Flavescere*, becoming golden, yellow, as in *Celeus flavescens*, the Blond-crested Woodpecker

## Flavicans *FLAV-ib-kanz*

*Flavere*, being golden or yellow-colored, as in *Prinia flavicans*, the Black-chested Prinia, with yellow underparts

## Flavicapilla *flav-ib-ka-PIL-la*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *capilla*, hair, as in *Xenopipo flavicapilla*, the Yellow-headed Manakin

## Flaviceps *FLAV-ib-seps*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *ceps*, head, as in *Auriparus flaviceps*, the Verdin, with a yellow face and head

## Flavicollis *flav-ib-KOL-lis*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *collis*, neck, as in *Yuhina flavicollis*, the Whiskered Yuhina, with both an orange and yellow collar

## Flavifrons *FLAV-ib-fronz*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Melanerpes flavifrons*, the Yellow-fronted Woodpecker

## Flavigaster, -ogaster

*flav-ib-GAS-ter/flav-o-GAS-ter*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *gaster*, stomach, as in *Hyliota flavigaster*, the Yellow-bellied Hyliota

## Flavigula, -aris

*flav-ib-GOO-la/flav-ib-goo-LAR-is*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *gula*, throat, as in *Crythagra flavigula*, the Yellow-throated Seedeater

## Flavinucha *flav-ib-NOO-ka*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *nucha*, nape, as in *Chrysophlegma flavinucha*, the Greater Yellownape

## Flavipennis *flav-ib-PEN-nis*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *pennis*, feather or wing, as in *Chloropsis flavipennis*, the Philippine Leafbird. Although mostly green, there are yellow fringes on the primary feathers

## Flavipes *flav-IP-ez*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *pes*, foot, as in *Tringa flavipes*, the Lesser Yellowlegs

## Flaviprymna *fla-vi-PRIM-na*

*Flavus*, yellow, and Greek, *prymnos*, rear end, as in *Lonchura flaviprymna*, the Yellow-rumped Mannikin

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

There are over 200 species of woodpecker, found all over the world except Australia, New Guinea, and Madagascar. They belong to the family Picidae, which also includes sapsuckers, wrynecks, piculets, flamebacks, and flickers. The Greater Yellownape, *Chrysophlegma flavinucha*, has a very large range across Asia. In Roman mythology, Picus was a handsome king but when the witch Circe tried to seduce him she turned him into a woodpecker for his apparent ability to interpret bird omens. Woodpeckers have zygodactyl (Greek for yoke-finger) feet, meaning two toes face forward and two backward, in a sort of X pattern, and their tail feathers are stiff. These two adaptations allow the woodpecker to lean back and prop itself against a tree while it pounds away at the bark. Special adaptations of the head and neck prevent injury to the bird while it uncovers food under tree bark, excavates nests holes, or even hammers on metal posts in order to announce its territory.



*Chrysophlegma flavinucha*,  
Greater Yellownape



# CHRISTIAN JOUANIN

(B. 1925)

Christian Jouanin, born in Paris in 1925, is a well-known and respected ornithologist whose specialty is petrels. At the age of 15 he began work at the National Museum of Natural History under the supervision of Jacques Berlioz, the head of the Department of Ornithology at the museum. Later he worked with Jean Dorst, president of the 16th International Ornithological Congress, who followed Berlioz as the head of the department. Jouanin and Dorst wrote the species description for the rare Djibouti Francolin, *Pternistis ochropectus*, whose type specimen they brought to the museum. Its specific epithet comes from the Greek, *ochros*, the color ocher, and the Latin, *pectus*, breast. Today there is some question about the species status of this bird because it is very closely related to other francolins and intermediate in both location and anatomy to other species.



In 1955 Jouanin published his first species description. Studying the Mascarene Petrel, *Pseudobulweria aterrima*, he found that this species was actually two species. He described and split off what is now named Jouanin's Petrel, *Bulweria fallax*. Both species are very rare and critically endangered. Continuing work on the Mascarene Petrel, which may be very close to extinction, he discovered yet another new species, Barau's Petrel, which he found breeding in the French territory of Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean. The name Barau is after Armand Barau, an agricultural engineer and ornithologist from Réunion. This petrel is one of the most recently discovered species of seabird, not described until 1964, although it had been long known to the local inhabitants of the island. Jouanin also discovered differences in the populations of Audubon's Shearwaters in the Seychelles and Réunion, and designated them a subspecies. He named the Seychelles subspecies after his wife Nicole, *Puffinus bailloni nicolae*.

Jouanin spent many years in the Indian Ocean, but in 1963 he launched studies on seabirds of the Atlantic Ocean when he joined Francis Roux on an expedition to the Savage Islands. Then he went on to collect specimens and data on Cory's Shearwater, *Calonectris borealis*, in the waters around Madeira with Alex Zino, a Portuguese ornithologist; Zino's Petrel, *Pterodroma madeira*, is named for this colleague.

*Diomedea exulans*,  
Wandering Albatross

At up to 11 foot 10 inches, the wingspan of the Wandering Albatross is the longest of any bird. This albatross can stay aloft for days by taking advantage of wind and wave currents close to the ocean's surface.

Jouanin is a recognized expert on the Order Procellariiformes, a group of seabirds in four families: albatrosses, storm petrels, diving petrels, petrels, and shearwaters. These birds, almost exclusively pelagic and found across the world's oceans, are often called tubenoses because of their tube-shaped nasal passages. Jouanin co-authored the chapter on Procellariiformes with J. L. Mougín in *Peters Check-list of the Birds of the World*.

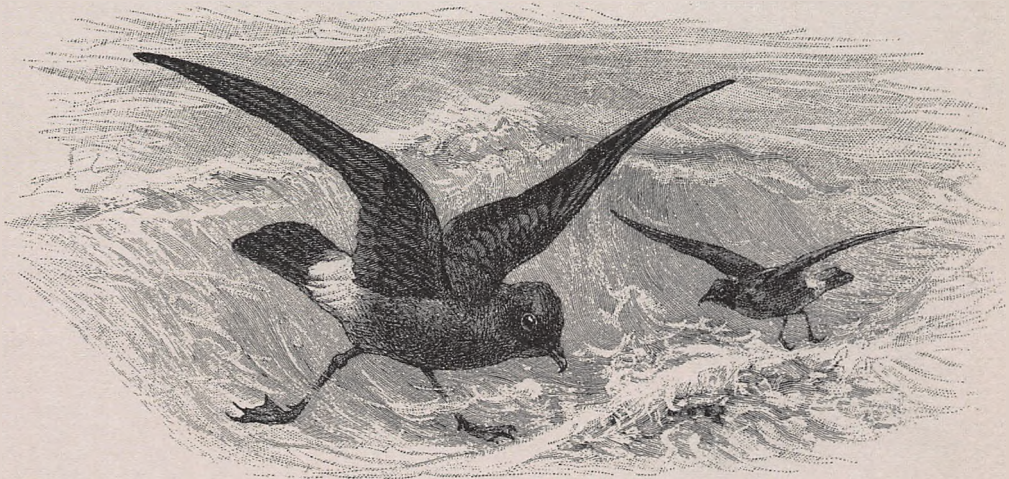
He was founder and director of the MAR Bureau (MAR stands for the first three letters of the word for wetlands in English, MARshes, French, *MARecages*, and Spanish, *MARismas*), an organization involved with the preservation of wetlands; general secretary of the French Société Nationale de Protection de la Nature; vice-president of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature; and member of the Permanent Executive Committee of the International Ornithological Committee.



*Calonectris borealis*,  
Cory's Shearwater

Cory's Shearwater was named after Charles Cory, who collected 19,000 bird specimens and eventually became curator of ornithology at the Field Museum of Chicago.

*Hydrobates pelagicus*,  
European Storm Petrel



"[Oiseaux De La Réunion by Barre, Barau, and Jouanin] should be mandatory for all school children of Réunion taking courses in geography on this magnificent island."

François Vuilleumier, *Wilson Bulletin* (June 1999)



**Flavirictus** *flav-ib-RIK-tus*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *riktus*, jaw, open mouth, as in *Meliphaga flavirictus*, the Yellow-gaped Honeyeater

**Flavirostris**, -a *flav-ib-ROSS-tris/tra*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *rostris*, bill, as in *Monasa flavirostris*, the Yellow-billed Nunbird

**Flaviventer**, -tris *flav-ib-VEN-ter/tris*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *venter*, underside, belly, as in *Dacnis flaviventer*, the Yellow-bellied Dacnis

**Flavivertex** *flav-ib-VER-teks*

*Flavus*, yellow, and *vertex*, highest point, as in *Myiopagis flavivertex*, the Yellow-crowned Elaenia, the common name from Greek *eleia*, olive, referring to its color

**Flavovirens**, -viridis, -virescens

*flav-o-VIR-enz/flav-o-vir-ID-is/flav-o-vir-ES-sens*  
*Flavus*, yellow, and *virere*, to be green, as in *Chlorospingus flavovirens*, the Yellow-green Bush Tanager

**Flavus** *FLA-vus*

Yellow, as in *Zosterops flavus*, the greenish yellow Javan White-eye

**Floccosus** *flok-KO-sus*

*Flocc-*, a lock of wool, flake, as in *Pycnoptilus floccosus*, the Pilotbird, whose species epithet may describe its loose plumage; its common name comes from its habit of following lyrebirds, taking prey that they flush



*Florisuga fusca*,  
Black Jacobin

**Floriceps** *FLOR-ib-seps*

*Flor-*, flower, and *ceps*, head, as in *Anthocephala floriceps*, the Blossomcrown

**Florida** *flo-REE-da*

*Floridis*, flowering, as in *Tangara florida*, the Emerald Tanager

**Floris** *FLO-ris*

From Flores, an island in Indonesia, as in *Treron floris*, the Flores Green Pigeon

**Florisuga** *flor-ib-SOO-ga*

*Flor*, flower, and *sugere*, to suck, as in *Florisuga fusca*, the Black Jacobin, a nectar-feeding hummingbird

**Fluviatilis** *floo-vee-a-TIL-is*

*Fluvialis*, of a river, as in *Locustella fluviatilis*, the River Warbler

**Fluvicola** *floo-vi-KO-la*

*Fluvi*, river, and *cola*, dwell, as in *Fluvicola pica*, the Pied Water Tyrant

**Foersteri** *FUR-ster-eye*

After F. Foersteri, German botanist and collector, as in *Melidectes foersteri*, the Huon Melidectes, Huon after a New Guinea peninsula

**Forbesi** *FORBS-eye*

After Henry Forbes, a Scottish explorer and collector, as in *Rallacula forbesi*, Forbes's Forest Rail; also William Forbes, British anatomist, collector, and zoologist, as in *Charadrius forbesi*, Forbes's Plover

**Forficatus**, -a *for-fi-KA-tus/ta*

*Forficata*, forked, as in *Dicrurus forficatus*, the Crested Drongo, with a forked tail

**Formicarius** *form-ib-KAR-ee-us*

Of the ant, as in *Formicarius moniliger*, the Mayan Anthrush

**Formicivora**, -ous *form-ib-SI-vor-a/us*

*Formica*, an ant, and *vora*, eat, devour, as in *Formicivora grisea*, the Southern White-fringed Antwren

**Formosa**, -sus *for-MO-sa/sus*

*Formosus*, beautiful, as in *Sitta formosa*, the Beautiful Nuthatch

**Formosae** *for-MO-see*

After Formosa, now Taiwan, as in *Treron formosae*, the Whistling Green Pigeon





*Sitta formosa*,  
Beautiful Nuthatch

**Forsteni** *FOR-sten-eye*

After Eltio Forsten, Dutch botanist and collector, as in *Ducula forsteni*, the White-bellied Imperial Pigeon

**Forsteri** *FOR-ster-eye*

After Johann Forster, German clergyman and naturalist, as in *Sterna forsteri*, Forster's Tern

**Fortis** *FOR-tis*

Strong, powerful, as in *Geospiza fortis*, the Medium Ground Finch of the Galapagos

**Foudia** *FOO-dee-a*

Mascarene name for the Fody, as in *Foudia madagascariensis*, the Red Fody

**Francesiae** *fran-SES-ee-ee*

After Henrietta Frances Cole, patroness of science, as in *Accipiter francesiae*, Frances's Sparrowhawk

**Francolinus** *frank-o-LEEN-us*

Latinization of the Italian *francolino*, little hen, as in *Francolinus francolinus*, the Black Francolin

**Frantzii** *FRANTZ-ee-eye*

After Alexander von Franzius, German naturalist and collector, as in *Catharus frantzii*, the Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush

**Fraseri**, -a, *FRAZ-er-eye/a*

After Louis Fraser, British zoologist and collector, as in *Deleornis fraseri*, Fraser's Sunbird

**Frater** *FRA-ter*

Brother, cousin, as in *Monarcha frater*, the Black-winged Monarch, apparently because of its gregarious habits

*Fratercula arctica*,  
Atlantic Puffin

## LATIN IN ACTION

The colorful beak of the Atlantic Puffin, *Fratercula arctica*, has caused it to be called a "sea parrot."

The name puffin originally meant "fatling" which actually referred to the chicks of the Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*). *Fratercula* means little brother or little friar, referring to the way their feet are held together in flight as if they were praying. Puffins eat mostly small fish and their strong beaks, spiny upper palates, and raspy tongues allow them to carry on average 10 fish at a time. One was recorded carrying 62 fish at once!

**Fratercula** *fra-ter-KOO-la*

*Frater*, brother, and *-cula*, small, as in *Fratercula arctica*, the Atlantic Puffin (see box)

**Fregata** *fre-GA-ta*

From Middle French, *frigate*, a small, fast ship, as in *Fregata magnificens*, the Magnificent Frigatebird, with large, sail-like wings

**Fregetta** *fre-GET-ta*

Latinized form of the English frigate, a small ship, as in *Fregetta grallaria*, the White-bellied Storm Petrel





**Frenatus**, -a *fre-NA-tus/ta*

From *frenare*, to hold, curb, restrain, as in *Bolemoreus frenatus*, the Bridled Honeyeater, a reference to the face pattern, as if wearing a bridle

**Fringilla**, -aris, -arius, -inus *frin-JIL-la/*

*frin-jil-LAR-is/ee-us/frin-jil-EYE-nus*

*Fringilla*, finch, as in *Fringilla coelebs*, the Common Chaffinch, the common name from the Old English *ceaffinc*, literally chaff finch, because of its habit of eating chaff, waste grain

**Fringilloides** *frin-jil-LOY-deez*

*Fringilla*, finch, and Greek, *oides*, resembling, as in *Dolospingus fringilloides*, the White-naped Seedeater

**Frontales** *fron-TAL-eez*

*Frons*, the forehead, brow, as in *Cinclidium frontale*, the Blue-fronted Robin

**Frontalis** *fron-TAL-is*

*Frons*, forehead, brow, as in *Anarhynchus frontalis*, the Wrybill

**Frontata**, -us *fron-TAT-a/us*

*Frons*, the forehead, brow, as in *Tricholaema frontata*, the Miombo Pied Barbet, after the Miombo woodlands of Africa

**Frugivorus** *froo-ji-VOR-us*

*Frugi*, fruit, and *vora*, to eat, as in *Calyptophilus frugivorus*, the Eastern Chat-Tanager

**Fucata** *foo-KA-ta*

*Fucare*, color, paint, dye, as in *Emberiza fucata*, the Chestnut-eared Bunting

**Fuciphagus** *foo-si-FAY-gus*

*Fuci*, seaweed, and *phagus*, eater of, as in *Aerodramus fuciphagus*, the Edible-nest Swiftlet; the species name derives from a Chinese story of the birds swooping down into the ocean to collect material for their nests, actually made almost exclusively of saliva

**Fuelleborni** *FUL-le-born-eye*

After Friederich Fülleborn, German physician, as in *Laniarius fuelleborni*, Fülleborn's Boubou, common name from its call

**Fuertesii** *foo-EHR-tess-eye*

After Louis Agassiz Fuertes, ornithologist and bird artist, as in *Hapalopsittaca fuertesii*, Fuertes's Parrot

**Fulgens** *FUL-jenz*

Glittering, as in *Eugenes fulgens*, the Magnificent Hummingbird



*Emberiza fucata*,  
Chestnut-eared Bunting

**Fulgidus** *ful-JEE-dus*

Shining, gleaming, glittering, from *fulgere*, to flash or shine, as in *Caridonax fulgidus*, the Glittering Kingfisher

**Fulica** *ful-ee-ka*

Waterfowl, as in *Fulica americana*, the American Coot

**Fulicarius** *ful-ih-KAR-ee-us*

Coot-like, as in *Phalaropus fulicarius*, the Red or Gray Phalarope, which swims on the surface of water

**Fuliginosa**, -sus *ful-ih-ji-NO-sa/sus*

*Fuligo*, soot, and *os-a*, full of, as in *Strepera fuliginosa*, the Black Currawong, a native Australian name perhaps from the call

**Fuligiventer** *ful-ih-ji-VEN-ter*

*Fuligo*, soot, and *venter*, belly, as in *Phylloscopus fuligiventer*, the Smoky Warbler

**Fuligula** *ful-ih-GOO-la*

*Fuligo*, soot, and *gula*, throat, as in *Aythya fuligula*, the Tufted Duck, referring to the bird's predominantly black color

**Fulmarus** *ful-MAR-us*

Old Norse, *full*, foul, and *mar*, gull, as in *Fulmarus glacialis*, the Northern Fulmar; the genus name comes from the bird's habit of regurgitating a foul-smelling liquid when disturbed and its superficial similarity to gulls





*Atlapetes fulviceps*,  
Fulvous-headed Brush Finch

## Fulva *FUL*-va

*Fulvus*, brownish, as in *Pluvialis fulva*, the Pacific Golden Plover

## Fulvescens *ful*-VES-senz

*Fulvus*, brownish, as in *Prunella fulvescens*, the Brown Accentor

## Fulvicapilla *ful*-vi-ka-PIL-la

*Fulvus*, brownish, and *capilla*, hair, as in *Cisticola fulvicapilla*, the Piping Cisticola, with a rufous cap

## Fulvicauda *ful*-vi-KAW-da

*Fulvus*, brownish, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Basileuterus fulvicauda*, the Buff-rumped Warbler

## Fulviceps *FUL*-vi-seps

*Fulvus*, brownish, and *ceps*, head, as in *Atlapetes fulviceps*, the Fulvous-headed Brush Finch

## Fulvicollis *ful*-vi-KOL-lis

*Fulvus*, brownish, and *collis*, neck, as in *Treron fulvicollis*, the Cinnamon-headed Green Pigeon

## Fulvifrons *FUL*-vi-fronz

*Fulvus*, brownish, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Empidonax fulvifrons*, the Buff-breasted Flycatcher

## Fulvigula *ful*-vi-GOO-la

*Fulvus*, brownish, and *gula*, throat, as in *Anas fulvigula*, the Mottled Duck

## Fumigatus *foo*-mi-GAT-us

To smoke, as in *Contopus fumigatus*, the Smoke-colored Pewee

## Funebria *foo*-NE-bris

Funeral, deadly, fatal, as in *Todiramphus funebria*, the Sombre or Funereal Kingfisher, pertaining to the bird's dark plumage

## Funerea, -us *foo*-NER-ee-a/us

Deadly, funereal, as in *Drepanis funerea*, the extinct Black Mamo

## Furcata, -tus *fur*-KA-ta/tus

Forked, as in *Tachornis furcata*, the Pygmy Palm Swift, with a forked tail

## Fusca *FUSS*-ka

*Fuscus*, dark, dusky, as in *Gerygone fusca*, the Western Gerygone, pronounced *jer-IF-gon-ee*

## Fuscata, -us *fuss*-KA-ta/tus

*Fuscus*, dark, as in *Lonchura fuscata*, the Timor Sparrow

## Fuscescens *fuss*-SES-senz

*Fuscus*, dark, as in *Catharus fuscescens*, the Veery, although the bird is more of a brownish-red coloration

## Fuscauda *foo*-shi-CAW-da

*Fuscus*, dark, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Habia fuscauda*, the Red-throated Ant Tanager

## Fuscollis *foo*-shi-KOL-lis

*Fuscus*, dark, dusky, and *collis*, neck, as in *Poicephalus fuscicollis*, the Brown-necked Parrot

## Fuscirostris *foo*-shi-ROSS-tris

*Fuscus*, dark, dusky, and *rostris*, bill, as in *Talegalla fuscirostris*, the Black-billed Brushturkey

## Fuscus *FUS*-kus

Dark, dusky, as in *Casiornis fuscus*, the Ash-throated Casiornis

*Catharus fuscescens*,  
Veery



## G

**Gabela** *ga-BEL-a*

After Gabela, in Angola, as in *Prionops gabela*, the Gabela Helmetshrike

**Gabonensis** *ga-bo-NEN-sis*

After Gabon, as in *Dendropicos gabonensis*, the Gabon Woodpecker

**Gaimardi** *gy-MAR-dye*

After Joseph Gaimard, French surgeon, explorer, and naturalist, as in *Phalacrocorax gaimardi*, the Red-legged Cormorant

**Galactotes** *ga-lak-TOT-eez*

Greek, *galaktos*, milk, and *otes*, resembling, as in *Erythropgia galactotes*, the Rufous-tailed Scrub Robin

**Galapagoensis** *ga-la-pa-go-EN-sis*

From the Galapagos, as in *Buteo galapagoensis*, the Galapagos Hawk

**Galatea** *ga-la-TEE-a*

After Galatea, a mythical Greek sea nymph, as in *Tanysiptera galatea*, the Common Paradise Kingfisher

**Galbula** *gal-BOO-la*

*Galbulus*, oriole, as in *Galbula galbula*, the Green-tailed Jacamar, jacamar from the Tupi language of South America

**Galeata**, -US *gal-ee-AT-a/us*

Helmeted, as in *Myiagra galeata*, the Slaty Monarch or Moluccan Flycatcher, helmet probably referring to the slight crest of most flycatchers

**Galericulata** *ga-ler-ih-koo-LA-ta*

*Galer*, cap, and *cul*, little, as in *Aix galericulata*, the Mandarin Duck, with a swept-back head crest

**Galerita** *gal-er-EE-ta*

*Galer*, cap, and *-ita*, little, as in *Cacatua galerita*, the Sulphur-crested Cockatoo

**Galgulus** *gal-GOO-lus*

*Galbulus*, oriole, as in *Loriculus galgulus*, the Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot. An oriole hangs its nest; some confusion caused the name to be attributed to this parrot, which hangs upsidedown from branches when seeking food



*Buteo galapagoensis*,  
Galapagos Hawk

**Galinieri** *gal-in-ee-AIR-eye*

After Joseph Galinier, French explorer of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), as in *Parophasma galinieri*, the Abyssinian Catbird

**Gallicolumba** *gal-li-ko-LUM-ba*

*Gallus*, cock, and *columba*, dove, as in *Gallicolumba rufigula*, the Cinnamon Ground Dove

**Gallinago** *gal-li-NA-go*

*Gallina*, hen, and *gallus*, cock, chicken, as in *Gallinago gallinago*, the Common Snipe; implies that the bird resembled a hen to the namer

**Gallinula** *gal-li-NOO-la*

Little hen, the diminutive of *gallina*, as in *Gallinula chloropus*, the Common Moorhen

**Gallirallus** *gal-li-RAL-lus*

*Galli*, chicken, and *rallus*, rail or thin, as in *Gallirallus torquatus*, the Barred Rail. The phrase "thin as a rail" refers to the laterally flattened bodies of these birds, not railroad tracks

## Gallopavo *gal-lo-PA-vo*

*Galli*, chicken, and *pavus*, peacock, as in *Meleagris gallopavo*, the Wild Turkey

## Gallopardix *gal-lo-PER-dik*

*Galli*, chicken, and *pardix*, partridge, as in *Gallopardix spadicea*, the Red Spurfowl

## Gallus *GAL-lus*

*Galli*, chicken, as in *Gallus gallus*, the Red Junglefowl; *Gallus gallus domesticus* is the familiar domesticated chicken

## Gambeli, -ii *GAM-bel-eye/gam-BEL-ee-eye*

After William Gambel, American naturalist and collector, as in *Poecile gambeli*, the Mountain Chickadee and *Callipepla gambelii*, Gambel's Quail

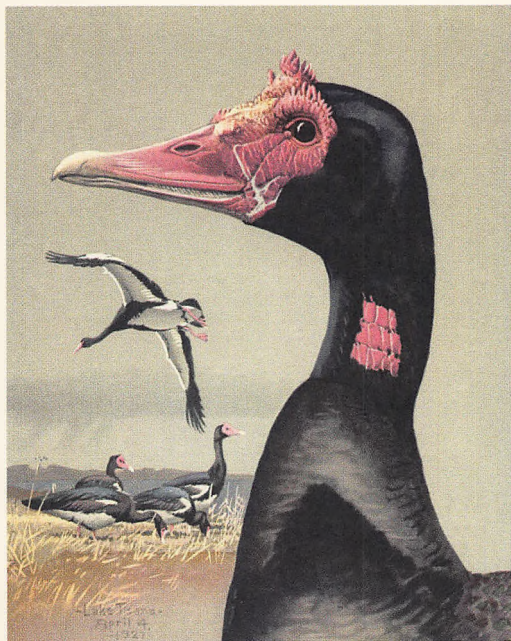
## Gambensis *gam-BEN-sis*

After Gambia, as in *Plectropterus gambensis*, the Spur-winged Goose

## Gampsonyx *gamp-SON-iks*

Greek, *gampso*, curved, and *onux*, nail, claw, as in *Gampsonyx swainsonii*, the Pearl Kite

*Plectropterus gambensis*,  
Spur-winged Goose



## Gampsorhynchus *gamp-so-RINK-us*

Greek, *gampso*, curved, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Gampsorhynchus torquatus*, the Collared Babbler with a somewhat hooked upper bill

## Garleppi *GAR-lep-pye*

After Gustav Garlepp, a German collector, as in *Compsoiza garleppi*, the Cochabomba Mountain Finch

## Garrula, -us *gar-ROO-la/lus*

Chattering, as in *Ortalis garrula*, the Chestnut-winged Chachalaca

## Garrulax *gar-ROO-laks*

Greek form of the Latin *garrulus*, talkative, chattering, as in *Garrulax canorus*, the Chinese Hwamei or Melodious Laughing Thrush

## Garzetta *gar-ZET-ta*

Italian for egret, as in *Egretta garzetta*, the Little Egret

## Gaudichaud *GAW-di-show-d*

After Charles Gaudichaud-Beupr , French pharmacist and explorer, as in *Dacelo gaudichaud*, the Rufous-bellied Kookaburra

## Gavia *GAV-ee-a*

Seabird, loon, as in *Gavia stellata*, the Red-throated Loon or Diver

## Gayi *GAY-eye*

After Claude Gay, French zoologist and collector, as in *Attagis gayi*, the Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe

## Geelvinkiana, -um *gel-vink-ee-AN-a/um*

After a Dutch ship and family, as in *Micropsitta geelvinkiana*, the Geelvink Pygmy Parrot

## Gelochelidon *je-lo-KEL-ih-don*

Greek, *gelo*, laugh, *chelidon*, swallow, as in *Gelochelidon nilotica*, the Gull-billed Tern, which feeds mainly on insects in flight (as do swallows) and has a distinct laughing call

## Genei *JEN-nay-eye*

After Guiseppe Gen , Italian naturalist, as in *Chroicocephalus genei*, the Slender-billed Gull

## Genibarbis *jen-ih-BAR-bis*

*Gena*, the cheek or chin, and *barbus*, barbel or whisker, as in *Myadestes genibarb*, the Rufous-throated Solitaire



# GAVIA

Most people are familiar with loons, or divers, members of the genus *Gavia* (GAV-ee-a), such as the Common Loon or Diver, *G. immer*. *Gavia* is the Latin word for seabird, originally used to describe a sea duck.

The word loon, sometimes associated with the moon, as in lunar, actually comes from the Norwegian term *lom* or *lum*, meaning clumsy. Loons are clumsy on land because their webbed feet are located far back on the body; very efficient for swimming but terrible for walking on land. The name might also have come from the Dutch *loen*, a crazy person. Loon, loony, and lunatic have all come to mean crazy, as in "crazy as a loon." The tremolo, the best known of their eerie calls, sounds like crazy laughter, hence the application of the name to an unbalanced person.

Loons, in their own order, Gaviiformes, and family, Gaviidae, are found only in North America and Eurasia. In Europe they are commonly called divers because they dive for their food, which they occasionally spear with their pointed bill. Most of their prey consists of fish, but frogs and crayfish are also in their diet. Since they feed by sight, they are found only on clear lakes. They can dive as deep as 200 feet (60 meters) in pursuit of prey, not only because of their rearward, laterally flattened legs and webbed feet, but also because their bones, unlike the hollow bones of most birds, are solid. In addition, they can flatten their feathers to expel air bubbles and even adjust their buoyancy so only their head is above water. For digesting their food, they ingest small stones called gastroliths to help grind food in their stomach. Loons are heavy, bulky birds, up to



*Gavia immer*,  
Great Northern Loon or Diver

13 pounds (6 kilograms), and require a long run across the water for takeoff. They would rather dive than fly to escape predators.

There are four (or five, according to some) species of loons/divers, all of which nest in freshwater lakes in northern North America and Eurasia. After breeding, they move to coastal waters of the Atlantic or Pacific to spend the winter. In the late winter or early spring, most loons shed all of their feathers in a short period of time, making them flightless for several weeks until the new flight feathers regrow.

The top figure is the Great Northern Loon or Diver, *Gavia immer*, the most abundant and widespread of North American loons. In the middle left is the Red-throated Loon, *Gavia stellata*; in the middle right the Yellow-billed Loon, *Gavia adamsii*; and on the bottom is the Pacific Loon, *Gavia pacifica*, which is nearly identical to the much rarer and not pictured Black-throated Loon, *Gavia arctica*.



*Geocolaptes olivaceus*,  
Ground Woodpecker



## Gentilis jen-TIL-is

Of the same family or clan, as in *Accipiter gentilis*, the Northern Goshawk. Common name comes from the Old English *gōsheafoc*, goose-hawk

## Geobates jee-o-BAT-eez

Greek, *geo*, ground, and *bates*, one who walks or haunts, as in *Geobates* (now *Geositta*) *peruviana*, the Coastal Miner

## Geococcyx jee-o-KOKS-siks

Greek, *geo*, ground, and Latin, *coccyx*, from Greek *kokkyx*, cuckoo, from the bird's call, so called by the ancient Greek physician Galen because the human tailbone supposedly resembles a cuckoo's beak, as in *Geococcyx californianus*, the Greater Roadrunner

## Geocolaptes jee-o-ko-LAP-teez

Greek, *geo*, ground and *colapt-*, chisel, peck, as in *Geocolaptes olivaceus*, the Ground Woodpecker

## Geoffroyi JEF-froy-eye

After Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire, a French naturalist, as in *Geoffroyus geoffroyi*, the Red-checked Parrot

## Gelochelidon jel-o-KEL-ih-den

Greek, *gelao*, to laugh in joy, and *chelidon*, swallow, as in *Gelochelidon nilotica*, the Gull-billed Tern. The call accounts for the laughing analogy and the wings resemble a swallow's

## Geopelia jee-o-PEL-ee-a

Greek, *geo*, ground and *pelia*, a dove, as in *Geopelia striata*, the Zebra Dove

## Geophaps JEE-o-faps

Greek, *geo*, ground and *phaps*, a dove or pigeon, as in *Geophaps plumifera*, the Spinifex Pigeon

## Geopsittacus jee-op-SIT-ta-kus

Greek *geo*, ground and *psittakos*, parrot-like, as in *Geopsittacus* (now *Pezoporus*) *occidentalis*, the Night Parrot. Nocturnal and terrestrial, it is a very rare endemic of Australia

## Georgiana, -us jor-jee-AN-a/us

After the State of Georgia in the US, as in *Melospiza georgiana*, the Swamp Sparrow

## Georgica, -us JOR-ji-ka/us

After South Georgia, as in *Anas georgica*, the Yellow-billed Pintail

## Geositta jee-o-SIT-ta

Greek *geo*, ground and Old English, *sittan*, to be seated, as in *Geositta peruviana*, the Coastal Miner which inhabits barren, gravelly ground, often with no vegetation

## Geospiza jee-o-SPY-za

Greek, *geo*, ground, and *spiz-a*, finch, as in *Geospiza cinnostris*, the Large Cactus Finch (see box), one of Darwin's Finches

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

The genus *Geospiza* (ground finch) and four other genera, for a total of 14 species, comprise the group of birds on the Galapagos Islands known as Darwin's Finches. For many years Darwin's Finches, the ancestor(s) of which somehow made it over 1,000 kilometers of ocean from South America to establish this population, were considered as part of the Emberizidae family, which includes those birds called buntings in the Old World and sparrows in the New World. Today they are part of Thraupidae, the tanagers and relatives. Darwin observed and collected all the finches except for the Woodpecker Finch (*Camarhynchus pallidus*), but thought that they were simply variations on a type. John Gould, a famous English ornithologist, determined that they were actually separate species.

## Geothlypis *jee-o-thi-LIP-is*

Greek, *geo*, ground, and *thlypis*, small bird, as in *Geothlypis nelsoni*, the Hooded Yellowthroat. Compared with other New World Warblers, *Geothlypis* species inhabit low vegetation

## Geotrygon *jee-o-TRY-gon*

Greek, *gaia*, earth, and *trygon*, cooer, as in *Geotrygon chrysis*, the Key West Quail-Dove

## Geranoaetus *jer-an-o-EE-tus*

Greek, *geranos*, crane, and *aetus*, eagle, as in *Geranoaetus albicaudatus*, the White-tailed Hawk

## Geranospiza *jer-an-o-SPY-za*

Greek, *geranos*, crane, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Geranospiza caerulescens*, the Crane Hawk, not exactly a finch, but its gray wings and call are crane-like

## Gerygone *ger-IH-gon-ee*

Greek, *goryo*, sound, speech, and *gone*, offspring, born of, as in *Gerygone chloronota*, the Green-backed Gerygone

## Gigantea, -us *jye-GAN-tee-a/us*

Gigantic, as in *Fulica gigantea*, the Giant Coot

## Gigas *JYE-gas*

Giant, as in *Patagona gigas*, the Giant Hummingbird

## Gilvus *JIL-vus*

Pale yellow, as in *Vireo gilvus*, the Warbling Vireo

## Githagineus *gitb-a-JIN-ee-us*

*Githagineus* is probably a corruption of the plant species *Agrostemma githago*, the Corn Cockle, a common European flower, as in *Bucanetes githagineus*, the Trumpeter Finch, which eats its seeds

## Glacialis *gla-see-AL-is*

Icy, as in *Fulmarus glacialis*, the Northern Fulmar, a common bird of the subarctic areas of the North Pacific and Atlantic Oceans

## Glandarius *glan-DAR-ee-us*

*Glandis*, an acorn, and *arius*, quantity of, as in *Garrulus glandarius*, the Eurasian Jay, an avid acorn eater

## Glareola *glar-ee-O-la*

*Glarea*, gravel, as in *Glareola pratincola*, the Collared Pratincole, which nests in a depression in the soil or gravel; common name from *prat*-, meadow, and *col*-, dwell

## Glaucescens *GLAW-ses-senz*

Graying, as in *Larus glaucescens*, the Glaucous-winged Gull

## Glaucidium, -us *glaw-SID-ee-um/us*

*Glaucus*, gray, bluish, and *dium*, open sky, as in *Glaucidium passerinum*, the Eurasian Pygmy Owl

## Glaucoides *glaw-KOY-deez*

*Glaucus*, gray, bluish, and *oides*, resembling, as in *Larus glaucoides*, the Iceland Gull

## Glaucus *GLAW-kus*

*Glaucus*, gray, bluish, as in *Anodorhynchus glaucus*, the Glaucous Macaw

## Glossopsitta *glos-sop-SIT-ta*

Greek, *glosso*, tongue, and *psitta*, parrot, as in *Glossopsitta concinna*, the Musk Lorikeet

## Gnoma *NOM-a*

Greek, *gnome* or *dwarf*, as in *Glaucidium gnoma*, the Mountain or Northern Pygmy Owl

## Gnorimopsar *no-ri-MOP-sar*

Greek, *gnorion*, a mark, judgement, and *psar*, starling, as in *Gnorimopsar chopi*, the Chopi Blackbird, which resembles a starling

## Godeffroyi *god-ef-FROY-eye*

After Johann Cesar Godeffroy, German zoologist, as in *Todiramphus godeffroyi*, the Marquesan Kingfisher

## Godlewskii *god-LOO-skee-eye*

After Wiktor Godlewski, a Polish zoologist, as in *Emberiza godlewskii*, Godlewski's Bunting



*Emberiza godlewskii*,  
Godlewski's Bunting



# The Color of Birds

Birds are among the most colorful of animals, their colored feathers evolving mainly as an adaptation for reproduction. Males of species such as hummingbirds, sunbirds, and tanagers attract mates with their bright plumage, and Red-winged Blackbirds, *Agelaius phoeniceus*, establish and defend territories with their blazing epaulets. And of course, in the thickness of tropical forests, the range of spectacular colors lets all of the birds know who's who. Other birds, for protection, have evolved disruptive coloration, patterns that break up their outline, such as banded plovers, and birds like nighthawks and bitterns have evolved camouflage.

Feather colors are formed by either or both pigment and structure. One pigment, melanin, produces colors from black to dull yellow; carotenoids are responsible for yellow to yellow-orange

*Agelaius phoeniceus*,  
Red-winged Blackbird



*Botaurus lentiginosus*,  
American Bittern

colors; and porphyrins produce bright colors in several shades of pink, red, yellow, and green. Structural colors are produced by the refraction of light through the cells of the feather. If you find a Blue Jay, *Cyanocitta cristata*, or bluebird feather and hold it in your hand, it appears blue because the incoming light is refracted as it is reflected. But if you hold the feather up to the light, the light is transmitted through the feather and it will appear brown due to the melanin granules. Iridescent colors of hummingbirds, sunbirds, and others are produced in a similar way and the angle at which the birds are viewed causes the colors to vary. Green colors are often produced by a yellow pigment deposited on top of structural blue.

Beginner birdwatchers often consider color to be the best clue to identification, being misled by the common names of birds. One would tend to look for the orange of the Orange-crowned Warbler, *Leiothlypis celata*, or an all blue Eurasian Blue Tit, *Cyanistes caeruleus*, when the orange crown is not at all obvious and the Blue Tit is not all blue.

Color perception also varies with different lighting conditions, so patterns, silhouette, behavior, and habitat are often better clues than color. Seeing color is a bonus.

But because colors are so important and so obvious a feature of birds, many of their scientific names reflect their color or color patterns. The all-white White Tern is *Gygis alba*, *Alcippe brunnea* is the mostly brown Dusky Fulvetta, and *Lonchura melanea*, the mostly black Buff-bellied Mannikin. The Blue-black Kingfisher is aptly named *Todiramphus nigrocyaneus*. Or the name may reflect the color of only a particular part as in the Little Tern, *Sternula albifrons*, with a white forehead; *Oriolus chlorocephalus*, the Green-headed Oriole; and the Cobalt-winged Parakeet, *Brotogeris cyanoptera*. There are many names that refer to color and use the color prefix like *alba*-, white, and are used repeatedly for different body parts. Hence we have *albicapilla* (white-haired), *albicauda* (white-tailed), *albiceps* (white-headed), *albicilla* (white-tailed), *albicollis* (white-collared), *albifrons* (white-forehead), etc. and *xantho*-, yellow, as in *xanthogastra* (yellow belly), *xanthocollis* (yellow collar), *xanthophrys* (yellow eyebrow), etc.

The color descriptions are primarily based upon the plumage of the mature male of the species, but we often find mismatches between the descriptive scientific and common names. The Crescent Honeyeater's scientific name, *Phylidonyris pyrrhopterus*, means red or flame-colored wings when the bird's are actually bright yellow. The Myrtle (once Yellow-rumped) Warbler's specific epithet of (*Setophaga*) *coronata* refers to its crown, not its rump. The Black-billed Cuckoo's scientific name, *Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*, refers to its red eye and the White-shouldered Antbird's name, *Myrmeciza melanocephus*, means black-headed.



*Oriolus chlorocephalus*,  
Green-headed Oriole

Yellow and brown pigments in the cells of feather barbules make the different shades and indescence levels of green colors via reflection and refraction on and through the cells.

We describe and name many birds by their colors, but birds, having better vision than us, can see not only the visible spectrum of colors but also UV light. Over 90 percent of birds examined reflect UV from their feathers and probably give birds a much different view of each other than we have. Male Blue Tits raise a UV reflective crown patch during courtship and the Blue Grosbeaks, *Passerina caerulea*, with the most UV reflection in their blue feathers are the most successful breeders. The black bibs of male House Sparrows, *Passer domesticus*, indicate their level of dominance and the amount of spotting on a female Western Barn Owl's, *Tyto alba*, breast indicates her parasite load to a potential mate.

*Todiramphus nigrocyaneus*,  
Blue-black Kingfisher





**Goeldii** *GELD-ee-eye*

After Emil Goeldi, Swiss zoologist, as in *Myrmeciza goeldii*,  
Goeldi's Antbird

**Goeringi** *GE-ring-eye*

After Anton Goering, German naturalist and painter, as in  
*Brachygalba goeringi*, the Pale-headed Jacamar

**Goethalsia** *ge-TAL-see-a*

After George Goethals, US Army officer and chief engineer of the  
Panama Canal, as in *Goethalsia bella*, Pirre Hummingbird

**Goffiniana** *gof-fin-ee-AN-a*

After Andreas Goffin, Dutch naval officer, as in *Cacatua goffiniana*,  
Tanimbar Corella

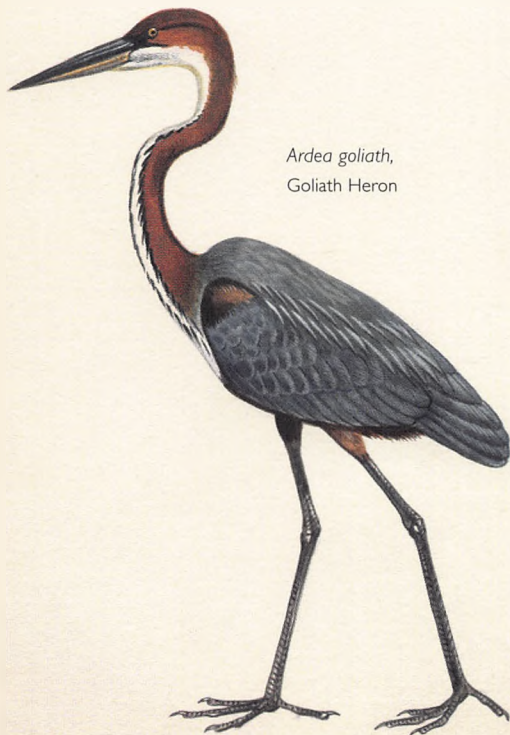
**Goldiei** *GOLD-ee-eye*

After Andrew Goldie, Scottish explorer, as in *Psittuteutes goldiei*,  
Goldie's Lorikeet

**Goldmania, -mani**

*gold-MAN-ee-a/GOLD-man-eye*

After Edward Goldman, American naturalist and mammalogist,  
as in *Goldmania violiceps*, Violet-capped Hummingbird



*Ardea goliath*,  
Goliath Heron

**Goliath** *go-LYE-ath*

Giant, Goliath, the Philistine warrior, as in *Ardea goliath*,  
the Goliath Heron

**Goodfellowi** *GOOD-fel-lo-eye*

After Walter Goodfellow, British ornithologist and explorer,  
as in *Regulus goodfellowi*, the Flamecrest

**Goodsoni** *GOOD-son-eye*

After Arthur Goodson, British ornithologist, as in *Columba*  
(now *Patagioenas*) *goodsoni*, the Dusky Pigeon

**Goudotii** *goo-DOT-ee-eye*

After Justin-Marie Goudot, French zoologist, as in *Chamaepetes*  
*goudotii*, the Sickle-winged Guan

**Gouldiae, -i** *GOULD-ee-ee-eye*

After John Gould, famous British ornithologist, as in *Erythrura*  
*gouldiae*, the Gouldian Finch. John Gould had 24 birds named after  
him, more than anyone else

**Graciae** *GRAY-see-ee*

After Grace Coues, sister of Elliot Coues, who first discovered  
*Setophaga graciae*, Grace's Warbler

**Gracilirostris** *gra-sil-ee-ROSS-tris*

*Gracilis*, slender, and *rostris*, bill, as in *Calamonastides gracilirostris*,  
the Papyrus Yellow Warbler

**Gracilis** *gra-SIL-is*

Slender, as in *Meliphaga gracilis*, the Graceful Honeyeater

**Gracula, -us, -ina** *gra-KOOL-a/us/gra-kool-EE-na*

*Graculus*, a jackdaw, as in *Gracula religiosa*, the Common Hill Myna

**Gracupica** *gra-koo-PIKE-a*

*Graculus*, a jackdaw, and *pica*, a magpie, as in *Gracupica contra*,  
the Pied Myna

**Graduacauda** *gra-doo-a-CAW-da*

*Gradus*, slope, walk, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Icterus graduacauda*,  
Audubon's Oriole, and may refer to the tapering of the tail feathers

**Graeca** *GREE-ka*

*Graecus*, Greek, as in *Alectoris graeca*, the Rock Partridge, whose  
home range includes Greece

**Grallaria, -us** *gral-LAR-ee-a/us*

*Grallae*, stilts and *aria*, air, as in *Fregetta grallaria*, the White-bellied  
Storm Petrel, from its habit of "walking" on the surface of the sea



**Grallaricula** *gral-lar-ib-KOOL-a*

*Grallae*, stilts, and *cula*, diminutive, as in *Grallaricula flavirostris*, the Ochre-breasted Antpitta, referring to its short tail making its legs appear disproportionately long

**Grallina** *gral-LEEN-a*

*Grallae*, stilts, as in *Grallina cyanoleuca*, the Magpie-lark with its longish legs

**Gramineus** *grah-MIN-ee-us*

Of grass, grassy, as in *Megalurus gramineus*, the Little Grassbird

**Graminicola** *grah-min-ih-KOL-a*

*Gramineus*, of grass, grassy, and *cola*, dweller, as in *Graminicola bengalensis*, the Indian Grassbird

**Grammacus** *GRAM-ma-kus*

Lined, striped, as in *Chondestes grammacus*, the Lark Sparrow

**Grammiceps** *GRAM-mi-seps*

*Gramma*, lines, and *ceps*, head, as in *Seicercus grammiceps*, the Sunda Warbler, with dark lines on its rufous head

**Granadensis** *gra-na-DEN-sis*

After New Granada, now part of present-day Colombia, as in *Picumnus granadensis*, the Grayish Piculet, a small woodpecker

**Granatellus** *gra-na-TEL-lus*

*Granatus*, garnet, as in *Granatellus venustus*, the Red-breasted Chat, with a bright-red chest

**Granatina** *gra-na-TEEN-a*

*Granatus*, garnet, as in *Erythropitta granatina*, the Garnet Pitta

**Grandala** *gran-DAL-a*

*Grand*, large, great, and *ala*, wing, as in *Grandala coelicolor*, the Grandala, with strikingly grand, as in spectacular, blue wings

**Grandis** *GRAN-dis*

*Grand*, large, great, as in *Ploceus grandis*, the Giant Weaver

**Graueri**, -ia *GRAU-er-eye/gray-ER-ee-a*

After Rudolph Grauer, Austrian explorer who collected in the Belgian Congo, as in *Bradypterus graueri*, Grauer's Swamp Warbler

**Gravis** *GRA-vis*

Heavy, important, as in *Puffinus gravis*, the Great Shearwater



*Grandala coelicolor*,  
Grandala

**Grayi** *GRAY-eye*

After George Gray, British ornithologist, as in *Turdus grayi*, Clay-colored Thrush; also after John Gray, older brother of George Gray, British ornithologist and entomologist, as in *Ammomanopsis grayi*, Gray's Lark

**Graysoni** *GRAY-son-eye*

After Andrew Jackson Grayson, American ornithologist and artist, as in *Mimus graysoni*, the Socorro Mockingbird

**Grimwoodi** *GRIM-wood-eye*

After Ian Grimwood, Chief Game Warden of Kenya, as in *Macronyx grimwoodi*, Grimwood's Longclaw

**Grisea** *GRIS-ee-a*

*Griceus*, gray, as in *Formicivora grisea*, the Southern White-fringed Antwren

**Grisegena** *grins-e-JEN-a*

*Griceus*, gray, and *gena*, chin, cheek, as in *Podiceps grisegena*, the Red-necked Grebe, with grayish-white cheeks

**Griseicapilla**, -us *gris-ee-eye-ka-PIL-la/us*

*Griceus*, gray, and *capilla*, hair on the head, as in *Sittasomus griseicapillus*, the Olivaceous Woodcreeper

**Griseiceps** *gris-ee-EYE-seps*

*Griceus*, gray, and *ceps*, head, as in *Accipiter griseiceps*, the Sulawesi Goshawk

## Griseicollis *gris-ee-eye-KOL-lis*

*Griceus*, gray, and *collis*, the neck, as in *Scytalopus griseicollis*, the Pale-bellied Tapaculo

## Griseigula, -gularis *gris-ee-eye-GOO-la/*

*gris-ee-eye-goo-LAR-is*

*Griceus*, gray, and *gula*, the throat, as in *Timeliopsis griseigula*, the Tawny Straightbill

## Griseipectus *gris-ee-eye-PEK-tus*

*Griceus*, gray, and *pectis*, the breast, as in *Pyrrhura griseipectus*, the Gray-breasted Parakeet

## Griseiventris *gris-ee-eye-VEN-tris*

*Griceus*, gray, and *ventris*, the underside, belly, as in *Melaniparus griseiventris*, the Miombo Tit

## Griseocephalus *gris-ee-o-se-FAL-us*

*Griceus*, gray, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Dendropicus griseocephalus*, the Olive Woodpecker

## Griseoceps *gris-ee-O-seps*

*Griceus*, gray, and *ceps*, head, as in *Microeca griseoceps*, the Yellow-legged Flyrobin



## Griscogularis *gris-ee-o-goo-LAR-is*

*Griceus*, gray, and *gularis*, throated, as in *Ammoperdix griscogularis*, the See-see Partridge

## Griseus *GRIS-ee-us*

Gray, as in *Nyctibius griseus*, the Common Potoo, common name after its wailing call

## Grossus *GRO-sus*

*Grossus*, thick, as in *Salpator grossus*, the Slate-colored Grosbeak, with a thick beak

## Grus *GRUSS*

Crane, such as *Grus americana*, the Whooping Crane

## Grylle *GRIL-lee*

Scottish name for *Cephus grylle*, the Black Guillemot

## Gryphus *GRIF-us*

Greek, *gryp-*, hook-nosed, as in *Vultur gryphus*, the Andean Condor

## Guadalcanaria *gwa-dal-kan-AR-ee-a*

After Guadalcanal Island, in the Solomon Islands, as in *Guadalcanaria inexpectata*, the Guadalcanal Honeyeater

## Guarauna *gwa-RAWN-a*

The Brazilian Indian name for this bird, *Aramus guarauna*, the Limpkin, the common name coming from the bird's limping gait

## Gubernetes *goo-ber-NEET-eez*

A rudder, governor, as in *Gubernetes yetapa*, the Streamer-tailed Tyrant

## Gujanensis *goo-ja-NEN-sis*

After French Guinea, as in *Odontophorus gujanensis*, the Marbled Wood Quail

## Gularis *goo-LAR-is*

*Gula*, throat, gullet, as in *Egretta gularis*, the Western Reef Heron or Egret; *Gularis* probably refers to the large throat of these birds, and there are two dozen with this specific epithet

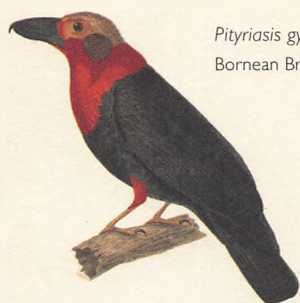
## Gurneyi *GER-nee-eye*

After John Gurney, British banker and amateur ornithologist, as in *Aquila gurneyi*, Gurney's Eagle

*Grus americana*,  
Whooping Crane

## LATIN IN ACTION

Ornithologists know little about the Bornean Bristlehead, *Pityriasis gymnocephala*. Presently considered the only member of the Pityriaseidae family and genus *Pityriasis*, in the past it was placed in other families, including Corvidae, the jay and crow family. It is a rainforest inhabitant but due to the destruction of forests by logging and the illegal black market for these birds as pets, it is considered near threatened. This iconic bird is the most sought after by birdwatchers in Borneo.



*Pityriasis gymnocephala*,  
Bornean Bristlehead

### Guttata, -us *gut-TAT-a/us*

*Gutta*, drop, spot, speck, as in *Ortalis guttata*, the Speckled Chachalaca, whose common name comes from its loud calls

### Guttaticollis *gut-ta-ti-KOL-lis*

*Gutta*, drop, spot, speck, and *collis*, neck, as in *Paradoxornis guttaticollis*, the Spot-breasted Parrotbill

### Gutturalis *gut-ter-AL-is*

*Guttur*, the throat, as in *Anthus gutturalis*, the Alpine Pipit, with a streaked throat

### Guy *GEE*

After J. Guy, French naturalist, as in *Phaethornis guy*, the Green Hermit

### Gygis *JI-jis*

*Guges*, a water bird, as in *Gygis alba*, the White Tern

### Gymnocephala, -us *jim-no-se-FAL-a/us*

Greek, *gymno*, naked, bare, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Pityriasis gymnocephala*, the Bornean Bristlehead (see box)

### Gymnocichla *jim-no-SICK-la*

Greek, *gymno*, naked, bare, and *cichla*, thrush, as in *Gymnocichla nudiceps*, the Bare-crowned Antbird

### Gymnoderus *jim-no-DER-us*

Greek, *gymno*, naked, bare, and *der-*, neck, hide, as in *Gymnoderus foetidus*, the Bare-necked Fruitcrow

### Gymnoglaux *JIM-no-glawks*

Greek, *gymno*, naked, bare, and *glaux*, owl, as in *Gymnoglaux* (now *Margarobyas*) *lawrencii*, the Bare-legged Owl

### Gymnogyps *JIM-no-jips*

Greek, *gymno*, naked, bare, and *gyps*, vulture, as in *Gymnogyps californianus*, the California Condor; Condor derives from American Spanish, *cuntur*, the native name for the bird

### Gymnorhinus, -a *jim-no-RYE-nus/na*

Greek, *gymno*, naked, bare, and *rhinos*, nose, as in *Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*, the Pinyon Jay, whose bill is featherless at the base

### Gypaetus *ji-PEE-tus*

Greek, *gymno*, naked, bare, and *aetus*, eagle, as in *Gypaetus barbatus*, the Bearded Vulture

### Gyps *JIPS*

Greek, *gyps*, vulture, as in *Gyps fulvus*, the Griffon Vulture



*Gymnogyps californianus*,  
California Condor



# PHOEBE SNETSINGER

(1921–1999)

Phoebe Snetsinger was born Phoebe Burnett in 1921 in Lake Zurich, Illinois. Her father, Leo Burnett, was the advertising executive who made famous the Jolly Green Giant, the Marlboro Man, Toucan Sam, Charlie the Tuna, Morris the Cat, the Pillsbury Doughboy, and Tony the Tiger. His successes and the resulting financial rewards eventually enabled Phoebe to travel the world in search of birds. Only eight bird-watchers in history have ever seen more than 8,000 of the approximately 10,000 species of birds found on our planet. Phoebe Snetsinger, of Missouri, was one of the eight.

When she started keeping a list, there were 8,500 officially named species, compared with about 10,000 now. Her list of more than 2,000 bird genera far surpassed anyone else's, and she was especially interested in monotypic genera, those genera that contain only one species of bird. She also kept notes on subspecies and geographic races that have since been elevated to the species level. So her life list of 8,400 species continues to grow even after her death in 1999.

She married her husband David Snetsinger, a scientist and administrator, whom she had known since the age of eleven. The marriage proved unfulfilling for Snetsinger, so she and her husband drifted apart but didn't divorce. She wrote dark, despairing poems, describing her marriage as "a stodgy, graceless, larval time."

"You'd go that far to see one bird?"

Phoebe Snetsinger



*Calicalicus rufocarpalis*,  
Red-shouldered Vanga

The rare Red-shouldered Vanga is endemic to south-western Madagascar and may be best known as the last bird to be sighted by Phoebe Snetsinger.

When Snetsinger was 34, a friend introduced her to bird-watching, and the sight of a Blackburnian Warbler, *Setophaga fusca*, changed her life. With her photographic memory and a fierce will to learn, she proved an excellent birder. Birding went from a hobby to a passion for Snetsinger in 1981 when a doctor told her she had terminal melanoma cancer and a short time to live. Rejecting therapy, she took off to Alaska on a scheduled trip, her first long-distance journey simply to see birds. She was 49.

Snetsinger liked to say her love of birds "began with a death sentence," and her relentless energy reflected that level of urgency as her cancer went into the first of several remissions. "Birding has meant a variety of things to many different people," Snetsinger once wrote in an article for a nature club, "but for me it has been intricately intertwined with survival." After her diagnosis she spent more time in the wilds of the world—jungles, swamps, deserts—than she did at home. She was most comfortable with her binoculars, floppy hat, and notebook.

Many of her birding tours cost more than \$5,000, and she maintained this travel schedule for 18 years after her diagnosis! There were setbacks, as the

melanoma recurred every five years or so, but always went into remission again. She died in an auto accident on a birding expedition to Madagascar, shortly after viewing an exceptionally rare Helmet Vanga, *Euryceros prevostii*, or Red-shouldered Vanga, *Calicalicus rufocarpalis*, depending on the story one reads. She was 68.

Well, with a name like Phoebe, she almost had to be a birder. There are only 900 species in North America, so she had to have the time and money to travel extensively on other continents to reach her 8,400 species. A few other people have gone as far in pursuit of birds, but only about 250 of them have ever hit the 5,000 mark, perhaps 100 people have seen 6,000 and only 12 or so have seen more than 7,000.

At the time of writing Tom Gullick, a British resident of Spain, is the only person ever to see 9,000 bird species; the 9,000th was the endemic Wallace's Fruit-Dove, *Ptilinopus wallacii*, on Yamdena in the Tanimbar Islands, Indonesia. He ended that trip with a total of 9,047 species. Gullick has been the top world lister since 2008 and holds



*Setophaga fusca*,  
Blackburnian Warbler

The Blackburnian Warbler is not easy to spot as it prefers to forage in the treetops, where it searches the branch tips for insects and larvae.



the record for the most species seen in South America (2,939) and Africa (2,081).

But Phoebe Snetsinger has to be given credit for her passion and perseverance, qualities that made her the icon of diehard bird listing. At the time of her death she was 2,000 birds ahead of her nearest rival. Some of her adventures and misadventures, which included recurrences of cancer, a gang rape in New Guinea, a shipwreck, earthquakes, and political problems, are detailed in her book *Birding on Borrowed Time*, published in 2003.

*Aramides axillaris*,  
Rufous-necked Wood Rail

Snetsinger passed the 8,000 mark in September 1995 when she spotted her first Rufous-necked Wood Rail.

## H

Haastii *HAAST-ee-eye*

After Johann Franz "Julius" von Haast, a German geologist who worked in New Zealand, as in *Apteryx haastii*, the Great Spotted Kiwi

Habia *HA-bee-a*

From an indigenous language of South America (Guarani) as in *Habia rubica*, the Red-crowned Ant Tanager

Habroptila *ha-brop-TIL-a*

Greek, *habro*, dainty, delicate, and *ptila*, feather, as in *Habroptila wallacii*, the Invisible Rail

Haemacephala *bee-ma-se-FAL-a*

Greek, *haima*, blood, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Megalaima haemacephala*, the Coppersmith Barber

Haemastica *bee-MASS-tik-a*

Greek, *haima*, blood, as in *Limosa haemastica*, the Hudsonian Godwit, with chestnut-red underparts

Haematoderus *bee-ma-to-DER-us*

Greek, *haimo*, blood, and *dera*, neck, throat, as in *Haematoderus militaris*, the Crimson Fruitcrow

Haematogaster *bee-ma-to-GAS-ter*

Greek, *haimo*, blood, and *gaster*, stomach, as in *Campephilus haematogaster*, the Crimson-bellied Woodpecker

Haematonota, -us *bee-ma-toe-NO-ta/tus*

Greek, *haimo*, blood, and *noto*, back, as in *Epinecrophylla haematonota*, the Stipple-throated Antwren

Haematopus *bee-ma-TO-pus*

Greek, *haimo*, blood, and *pous*, foot, as in *Haematopus ater*, the Blackish Oystercatcher, although the bill is blood red, not the feet

Haematortyx *bee-ma-TOR-tiks*

Greek, *haimo*, blood, and *ortyx*, quail, as in *Haematortyx sanguineps*, the Crimson-headed Partridge

Haematospiza *bee-ma-to-SPY-za*

Greek, *haimo*, blood, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Haematospiza* (now *Carpodacus*) *sipahi*, the Scarlet Finch

Hainanus *hye-NAN-us*

After Hainan, China, as in *Cyornis hainanus*, the Hainan Blue Flycatcher

Halcyon *HAL-see-on*

Greek, kingfisher, as in *Halcyon senegalensis*, the Woodland Kingfisher

Haliaeetus *hal-ee-a-EE-tus*

Greek, *hals*, the sea, and *aetus*, eagle, as in *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, the White-bellied Sea Eagle

Haliaetus *ha-lee-EE-tus*

Sea eagle, osprey, as in *Pandion haliaetus*, the Western Osprey

Haliastur *ha-lee-AST-ur*

Greek *hals*, the sea, and *-astur*, a hawk, as in *Haliastur indus*, the Brahminy Kite, which often feeds along the coast

Halli *HALL-eye*

After Robert Hall, Australian ornithologist, as in *Macronectes halli*, Northern Giant Petrel

*Habroptila wallacii*,  
Invisible Rail





# HALCYON

There are about 90 species of kingfishers spread over 17 genera. The *Halcyon* (*HAL-see-on*) genus contains 11 of the 60 or so bird species known as tree or wood kingfishers and are primarily Old World in distribution. *Halcyon* comes from Alcyone of Greek mythology, daughter of Aeolus, the ruler of the winds. She married Ceyx, who died in a shipwreck. Alcyone was so upset she drowned herself in the sea, after which the gods turned both of them into kingfishers. When Alcyone nested, Aeolus calmed the winds for a week. These seven days became known as the "halcyon days."

Kingfishers are so called because they are supposedly the "king of the fishers," but tree kingfishers will also take small reptiles, amphibians, crabs, and even small birds and mammals. The Ruddy Kingfisher (*H. coromanda*) is known to feed on land snails that it crushes with an "anvil rock." Kingfishers typically beat larger prey on a branch to disable and soften it before swallowing.

Tree kingfishers will nest in a tree cavity made by woodpeckers or dig out rotting wood to make a hole. Some will nest in termite nests and others excavate tunnels in riverbanks. Like all the other members of its avian order Coraciiformes, which includes bee eaters, rollers, and hornbills, their feet exhibit "syndactly" (fused toes); their third and fourth toes are joined at the base to help them to dig nest holes. They are monogamous and territorial; along river banks these territories are likely to be long and narrow, but for the forest-nesting species they are oval or circular. Kingfishers lay four to seven eggs in a nest cavity 20 to 40 inches



*Halcyon senegaloides*,  
Mangrove Kingfisher

(50 to 100 centimeters) long. In times when food is scarce, egg-laying may take place every other day but incubation begins immediately, so the young are at different ages and sizes as they hatch. The older hatchlings are more successful in begging for food and therefore have a better chance of survival than the younger ones. This strategy of

asynchronous hatching is also employed by birds of prey and other birds to assure that at least one or two young make it to fledging.



*Halcyon coromanda*,  
Ruddy Kingfisher

# HALIAEETUS

From the Greek for sea eagle or osprey, the genus *Haliaeetus* (*ha-lee-EE-tus*) contains eight living species and is one of the oldest groups of birds, commonly known as sea eagles. Most have white tails and a few have white heads. Perhaps the most well-known, weighing in at 13 pounds (6 kilograms), is the Bald Eagle, *H. leucocephalus*, the national bird of the US. The bird is not really bald; its name derives from the term “piebald,” which refers to large patches of color, usually white.

Most sea eagles feed on fish but will take other prey and are not averse to eating carrion. In Alaska, where there are no vultures, Bald Eagles can be seen scavenging around garbage dumps. Sea eagles will also harass other birds such as gannets and gulls in an effort to make them drop their piscine prey. But they are also efficient predators. The White-bellied Sea Eagle, *H. leucogaster*, flies low over the water with its talons tucked under its chin and strikes rapidly at the water surface while flapping its wings in a strong effort to take off once the fish



*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*,  
Bald Eagle

is seized. The African Fish Eagle, *H. vocifer*, flies from its perch in a tree to swoop down on fish and, like all sea eagles, has prickles on the underside of its toes to help hold its slippery prey. The White-tailed Eagle, *H. albicilla*, eats a variety of fish but commonly targets water birds such as terns, cormorants, loons (or divers), grebes, ducks, coots, and even skuas.

Sea eagles, mature by about five years of age, mate for years, sometimes even for life, according to evolving evidence. The pairs build huge nests that may exceed 10 feet (3 meters) in diameter and weigh 3 tons. The nests may be used year after year for many years, sometimes by successive generations.

The populations of sea eagles in both North America and Europe have suffered because they are top predators and accumulate toxins, such as pesticides and pollutants. They have also been shot and harassed by farmers, hunters, and egg-collectors over the years, accelerating the decline.

*Haliaeetus vocifer*,  
African Fish Eagle



**Halobaena** *ha-lo-BEEN-a*

Greek, *hals*, the sea, and *baen*, walk, step, as in *Halobaena caerulea*, the Blue Petrel, for the petrel habit of "tip-toeing" on the ocean's surface

**Halocyptena** *ha-lo-sip-TEN-a*

Greek, *hals*, sea, *okus*, speedy, and *ptenos*, winged, flying, as in *Halocyptena* (now *Oceanodroma*) *microsoma*, the Least Storm Petrel

**Hamirostra** *ha-mee-ROSS-tra*

*Hamus*, hooked, and *rostris*, beak, as in *Hamirostra melanosternon*, the Black-breasted Buzzard

**Hammondii** *ham-MOND-ee-eye*

After William Hammond, military physician and biological collector, as in *Empidonax hammondii*, Hammond's Flycatcher

**Hapalopsittaca** *ha-pa-lop-SIT-ta-ka*

Greek, *hapalo*, gentle, soft, and Latin, *psittaca*, parrot, as in *Hapalopsittaca amazonina*, the Rusty-faced Parrot

**Hapaloptila** *ha-pa-lop-TIL-a*

Greek, *hapalo*, gentle, soft, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Hapaloptila castanea*, the White-faced Nunbird

**Haplochelidon** *hap-lo-kel-EYE-don*

Greek, *hapalo*, gentle, soft, and *chelidon*, swallow, as in *Haplochelidon andecola*, the Andean Swallow

**Haplochrous** *hap-LO-krus*

Greek, *hapalo*, gentle, soft, and *chroa*, skin, complexion, as in *Accipiter haplochrous*, the White-bellied Goshawk, from the soft appearance of its plumage, especially the white belly

**Haplonota** *hap-lo-NO-ta*

Greek, *hapalo*, gentle, soft, and *notos*, back, as in *Grallaria haplonota*, the Plain-backed Antpitta

**Haplophaedia** *hap-lo-FEE-dee-a*

Greek, *hapalo*, gentle, soft, and *phaedros*, bright, brilliant, as in *Haplophaedia lugens*, the Hoary Puffleg

**Haplospiza** *hap-lo-SPY-za*

Greek, *hapalo*, gentle, soft, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Haplospiza rustica*, the Slaty Finch, from the soft appearance of its plumage

**Hardwickii** *hard-WIK-ee-eye*

After Thomas Hardwicke, General in the East India Company, as in *Chloropsis hardwickii*, the Orange-bellied Leafbird

**Harpactes** *har-PAK-teez*

Greek, *harpact*, to rob, seize, as in *Harpactes ardens*, the Philippine Trogon, which steals the nests of termites and wasps to use as its own. *Trogon* is Greek for nibbler: it gnaws at tree bark to make cavities

**Harpagus** *har-PAY-gus*

Greek, *harpag*, hook, as in *Harpagus bidentatus*, the Double-toothed Kite

**Harpia** *HAR-pee-a*

Greek, *harpi*, a sickle, bird of prey, as in *Harpia harpyja*, the Harpy Eagle, after the mythical harpy

**Harpyhaliaetus** *har-pee-hal-ee-EE-tus*

Greek, *harpi*, a sickle, bird of prey, and *haliaet*, *-e*, *-us*, sea eagle, osprey, as in *Harpyhaliaetus* (now *Buteogallus*) *coronatus*, the Crowned Solitary Eagle

**Harpyopsis** *har-pee-OP-sis*

Greek, *harpi*, a sickle, bird of prey, and *opsis*, appearance, as in *Harpyopsis novaeguineae*, the Papuan Eagle

**Harterti**, *-tula* *HART-ert-eye/hart-er-TOO-la*

After Ernst Hartert, German ornithologist, as in *Asthenes harterti*, the Black-throated Thrush

**Hartlaubi**, *-ii* *HART-laub-eye/hart-LAUB-ee-eye*

After Karl Hartlaub, German academic and explorer, as in *Tauraco hartlaubi*, Hartlaub's Turaco

*Hapalopsittaca amazonina*,  
Rusty-faced Parrot





L A T I N I N A C T I O N

Being the smallest bird in the world is both a distinction and a burden. The Bee Hummingbird (*Mellisuga helenae*), once called the Cuban Bee Hummingbird, has a very high metabolism because of its size, about 2 to 2½ inches (5 to 6 centimeters) long and weighing about 1.7 grams, comparable in size to a large bee. Some amateur birdwatchers have mistaken bees and moths for Bee Hummingbirds. The small size means that the large surface area of the bird, which is responsible for heat loss, and the small volume of the bird, which produces body heat, requires that the bird spend 15 percent of its daily activity eating. Its daily body temperature is 105°F (41°C) but drops to 86°F (30°C) at night to conserve energy. They could not survive without going into nightly torpor. *Mellisuga* (honey sucker) is a bit misleading because they actually ingest nectar, not honey, and not by sucking, but by sopping it up with their mop-like tongue.

## Harwoodi *HAR-wood-eye*

After Leonard Harwood, English naturalist and taxidermist, as in *Pternistis harwoodi*, Harwood's Francolin

## Hasitata *has-ib-TA-ta*

Hesitate, as in *Pterodroma hasitata*, the Black-capped Petrel, alluding to the first observer's uncertainty about naming the bird

## Hauxwelli *HAWKS-wel-lye*

After J. Hauxwell, English bird collector, as in *Turdus hauxwelli*, Hauxwell's Thrush

## Hawaiiensis *ha-wy-ee-EN-sis*

After Hawaii, as in *Corvus hawaiiensis*, the now extinct Hawaiian Crow, which is extinct in the wild

## Hedydipna *hed-ee-DIP-na*

Greek, *hedy*, sweet, *dipna*, meal, as in *Hedydipna collaris*, the Collared Sunbird, which feeds on nectar

## Heermanni *HAIR-man-nye*

After Adolphus Heermann, an American military surgeon-naturalist, as in *Larus heermanni*, Heermann's Gull

## Heinrichia, -i *hine-RICK-ee-a/eye*

After Gerd Heinrich, German zoologist, as in *Heinrichia calligyna*, the Great Shortwing

## Heinrothi *HINE-rot-eye*

After Oskar Heinroth, German zoologist, as in *Puffinus heinrothi*, Heinroth's Shearwater

## Heleia *hel-LAY-ee-a*

Greek, Helen, as in *Heleia muelleri*, the Spot-breasted Heleia

## Helenae *HEL-en-ee*

Greek, Helen, as in *Mellisuga helenae*, the Bee Hummingbird, smallest bird in the world; Helenae probably from Helen Booth, wife of Charles Booth, British philanthropist

## Heliactin *hel-ee-ACT-in*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *actis*, a ray, beam, as in *Heliactin bilophus*, the Horned Sungem

## Heliangelus *hel-ee-an-JEL-us*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *angelus*, a messenger or angel, as in *Heliangelus mavors*, the Orange-throated Sunangel



*Pterodroma hasitata*,  
Black-capped Petrel



*Heliomaster longirostris*,  
Long-billed Starthroat

## Helianthea *hel-ee-AN-thee-a*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *anthea*, flower, as in *Coeligena helianthea*, the Blue-throated Starfrontlet

## Helias *HEL-ee-as*

Greek, *helios*, sun, as in *Eurypyga helias*, the Sunbittern. The pattern on its outspread wings resembles a rising sun

## Heliobates *hel-ee-o-BA-teez*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *bates*, one that walks or hunts, as in *Camarhynchus heliobates*, the Mangrove Finch; inhabits the Galapagos, a very sunny place

## Heliobletus *hel-ee-o-BLE-tus*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *bletos*, affected, hurt, as in *Heliobletus contaminatus*, the Sharp-billed Treehunter; the sun beats down heavily on this bird

## Heliodoxa *hel-ee-o-DOK-sa*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *doxa*, glory, as in *Heliodoxa gularis*, the Pink-throated Brilliant

## Heliomaster *hel-ee-o-MASS-ter*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *master*, to shine, as in *Heliomaster longirostris*, the Long-billed Starthroat

## Heliopais *hel-ee-o-PYE-is*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *paid*, child, as in *Heliopais personatus*, the Masked Finfoot; the reference to child may have to do with the bird's ability to fly with young tucked into wing pouches

## Heliornis *hel-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Heliornis fulica*, the Sungrebe, the name coming from the markings on the underside of the wings that resemble suns

## Heliothryx *hel-ee-O-thriks*

Greek, *helios*, sun, and *thrix*, hair, as in *Heliothryx auritus*, the Black-eared Fairy; *thrix* probably refers to the delicate feathering

## Hellmayri *HEL-mare-eye*

After Charles Hellmayr, a German zoologist, as in *Anthus hellmayri*, Hellmayr's Pipit

## Helmitheros *hel-MIH-ther-os*

Greek, *helmins*, worm, and *theros*, hunt, as in *Helmitheros vermivorum*, the Worm-eating Warbler

## Heloisa *hel-o-EE-sa*

Heloise, French name, as in *Atthis heloisa*, the Bumblebee Hummingbird. Who Heloise was is unclear; here, probably the nun of Abelard and Heloise fame



*Heliothryx auritus*,  
Black-eared Fairy





*Hemicircus conretus*,  
Gray-and-buff Woodpecker



**Hemicircus** *heb-mee-SIR-kus*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *circus*, ring, circle, as in *Hemicircus concretus*, the Gray-and-buff Woodpecker, with scalloped feathering on its wings

**Hemignathus** *beh-mig-NATH-us*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *gnathus*, jaw, as in *Hemignathus* (now *Chlorodrepanis*) *virens*, the Hawaii Amakihi; the lower jaw is about half as long as the upper jaw

**Hemileucurus** *heb-mi-loy-KOO-rus*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, *leucos*, white, and *oura*, tail, as in *Campylopterus hemileucurus*, the Violet Sabrewing

**Hemileucus** *heb-mi-LOY-kus*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *leuc-*, white, as in *Lampornis hemileucus*, the White-bellied Mountaingem

**Hemimacronyx** *heb-mi-ma-KRON-iks*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, *makros*, large, long, and *onux*, claw, as in *Hemimacronyx* (now *Anthus*) *chloris*, the Yellow-breasted Pipit; *hemi-* refers to its (half/partial) relationship to the closely related but debated genus *Macronyx*, rather than the claw

**Hemiphaga** *heb-mee-FAY-ga*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *phagein*, eat, as in *Hemiphaga chathamensis*, the Chatham Pigeon. Shortened from *Hemicarpophaga*, eater of half seeds, a description of its feeding habit (dispenser of undigested seeds)

**Hemiprocne** *heb-mee-PROK-nee*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and Latin, *progne*, swallow, as in *Hemiprocne coronata*, the Crested Treeswift; it resembles a swallow but is in a different family

**Hemipus** *HEM-ih-pus*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *pous*, foot, as in *Hemipus picatus*, the Bar-winged Flycatcher-shrike, with smaller legs and feet than birds of a similar size in the same family

**Hemispingus** *hem-ee-SPIN-gus*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *spingus*, sparrow, as in *Hemispingus reyi*, the Gray-capped Hemispingus, a warbler-like tanager

**Hemitesia** *hem-ee-TESS-ee-a*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *tesia*, a genus of warbler, as in *Hemitesia* (now *Urosphena*) *neumanni*, Neumann's Warbler

**Hemithraupis** *hem-ee-THRAW-pis*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *thraupis*, a small bird, as in *Hemithraupis ruficapilla*, the Rufous-headed Tanager

**Hemixantha** *hem-iks-AN-tha*

Greek, *hemi-*, half, and *xanth*, yellow, as in *Microeca hemixantha*, the Golden-bellied Flyrobin

**Hendersoni** *HEN-der-son-eye*

After George Henderson, English Army officer and traveler, as in *Podoces hendersoni*, Henderson's Ground Jay

**Henslowii** *henz-LOW-ee-eye*

After John Henslow, English botanist, as in *Ammodramus henslowii*, Henslow's Sparrow

**Herberti** *HER-bert-eye*

After E. G. Herbert, English collector and naturalist, as in *Stachyris herberti*, the Soory Babbler

**Herbicola** *her-bi-KO-la*

*Herbi*, grass, and *cola*, dwell, as in *Emberizoides herbicola*, the Wedge-tailed Grass Finch

**Herodias** *heb-ROD-ee-us*

Greek, heron, as in *Ardea herodias*, the Great Blue Heron

**Herpetotheres** *her-pe-to-THER-eez*

Greek, *herpeto*, reptile, and *thero*, hunt, as in *Herpetotheres cachinnans*, the Laughing Falcon

**Herpsilochmus** *herp-si-LOK-mus*

Greek, *herpso*, creep, creeping, and *lochmus*, thicket *Herpsilochmus gentryi*, the Ancient Antwren

*Ardea herodias*,

Great Blue Heron



# PHILLIP CLANCEY

(1917–2001)

Born in 1917 in Glasgow, Scotland, Phillip Clancey was educated there and developed his artistic skills at the Glasgow School of Art. He showed an early interest in birds and joined the British Ornithologists' Union at the age of 20. Over the next 16 years he published a variety of papers on the systematics of birds, especially those of Scotland. Thirty-three of his holotypes and 5,500 Western Palearctic bird skins he collected are now housed at the National Museum of Scotland.

Clancey served with the allied forces in the British Army in Sicily and Italy in World War II, and

was deafened in one ear by an artillery explosion. Despite the hardships of war he pursued his avocation during the conflict and collected a race of the Woodchat Shrike (*Lanius senator*) in Sicily.

In 1948 and 1949 he accompanied Col. Richard Meinertzhagen as a field assistant on an ornithological expedition to Yemen, Aden, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Africa. At one point Meinertzhagen and Clancey had a heated argument about bustards in Namibia that became so violent they drew guns on each other. The bird skinner intervened to defuse the situation. Another time Meinertzhagen abandoned Clancey when he was very ill. Meinertzhagen later published the findings of this expedition in *Birds of Arabia* without ever mentioning Clancey's considerable contributions to the research.

Clancey immigrated to South Africa in 1950 and was hired as the curator of the Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg, even though he had no formal education beyond secondary school. In 1952 he became the director of the Durban Museum and Art Gallery, a position he held until his retirement in 1982. He also served as president of the Southern African Museum Association, president of the Southern Africa Ornithological Society, and was long-standing president of the Natal Bird Club. The American Ornithologists' Union honored him by naming him corresponding fellow.



Woodchat Shrike,  
*Lanius senator*

Latin, *Lanius*, means butcher; and *senator* refers to the senatorial robe-like pattern of the male's back.

During his tenure as director of the Durban Museum and Art Gallery, Clancey participated in, initiated, and led 32 ornithological expeditions to various parts of Southern Africa. He compiled a large number of new distribution records and collected many specimens for the museum. His expeditions to



*Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus*,  
Eurasian Wren

Named *Troglodytes troglodytes indigenus* by Clancey.

He was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science from the University of Natal, the Gill Memorial Medal of the

Mozambique were especially important because he succeeded in bringing back the largest number of specimens ever collected from this country. He donated his collection of nearly 32,000 bird skins, considered to be the finest in Africa, to the museum. He prepared many of these skins himself and was noted for his expertise in this area. Unfortunately, he was not the most ethical of collectors; he was criticized for his disregard for restrictions stated on collecting permits. At one point, he was arrested for collecting without a permit and his shotgun was confiscated. He later bought that same shotgun back at an auction.

Clancey wrote and published extensively, amassing over 600 publications, several of which were substantial and respected works, such as *The Birds of Natal and Zululand* (1964), *The Rare Birds of Southern Africa* (1985), and *The Birds of Southern Mozambique* (1996), which he illustrated with his own paintings. Clancey also co-authored the second volume of the *Atlas of Speciation of African Birds*, published by the British Natural History Museum in 1978.

Southern African Ornithological Society, and a fellowship from the Museum Association in London, England. He named over 200 subspecies of African birds and several avian subspecies were named after Clancey by other ornithologists. He continued as a research associate of the Durban Museum and Art Gallery until his death in 2001 at the age of 83.

A life-long bachelor, Clancey focused almost exclusively on his ornithological and museum work, but in later years he increasingly devoted himself to painting and taking on commissions. He was so adept at painting that when someone for whom he had painted a bird pointed out that the eye color was wrong, Clancey changed it with one brushstroke. His artistic talents are evident not only in the many bird paintings presented in his books, but also in the dioramas on display in the Durban Natural Science Museum. He repainted some of the dioramas up to six times until they met his standards. His portraits of birds are still in great demand by collectors.

"Clancey was a rare combination of scientist, author, artist, and administrator."

David Allan, *The Auk* (2003)



## Hesperiphona *hess-pear-ih-PHONE-a*

Greek, *hesperis*, evening, and *phone*, sound, as in *Hesperiphona vespertina*, the Evening Grosbeak

## Heterocercus *he-ter-o-SIR-kus*

Greek, *heteros*, different, and *cercus*, tail, as in *Heterocercus flavivertex*, the Yellow-crested Manakin. The tails of this Manakin genus are different from other Manakin genera

## Heterolaemus *he-ter-o-LEE-mus*

Greek, *heteros*, different, and *laemus*, throat as in *Phyllergates heterolaemus*, the Rufous-headed Tailorbird; the white throat stands out from the rest of the plumage

## Heteromyias *he-ter-o-MY-ee-as*

Greek, *heteros*, different, and *muia*, fly, as in *Heteromyias albispectularis*, the Ashy Robin. Probably refers to the slightly different flycatcher diet of this bird

## Heteronetta *he-ter-o-NET-ta*

Greek, *heteros*, different, and *netta*, duck, as in *Heteronetta atricapilla*, the Black-headed Duck; an unusual duck, falling somewhere between the diving and stiff-tailed ducks

## Heterophasia *he-ter-o-FAZ-ee-a*

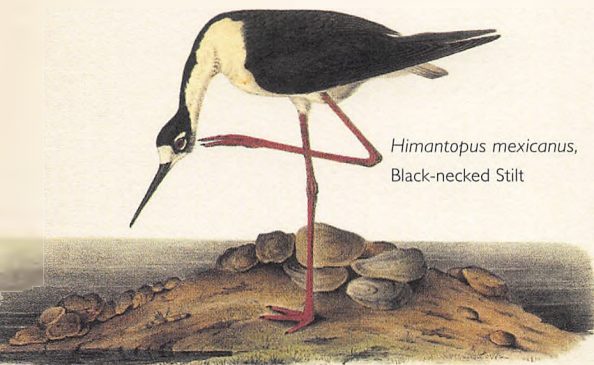
Greek, *heteros*, different, and *phasia*, speech, as in *Heterophasia auricularis*, the White-eared Sibia; presumably named for its call

## Heteroscelus *heh-ter-os-SEL-us*

Greek, *heteros*, different, and *skelos*, leg, as in *Heteroscelus brevipes*, the Gray-tailed Tattler, with different scaling on its legs; new DNA evidence puts the bird into the genus *Tringa*

## Heuglinii, -i, *hoy-GLIN-ee-eye/HOY-glin-eye*

After Theodor von Heuglin, German engineer and ornithologist, as in *Neotis heuglinii*, Heuglin's Bustard



*Himantopus mexicanus*,  
Black-necked Stilt

## Hiaticula *hy-at-ih-KUL-a*

*Hiatus*, cleft, opening, and *cula*, inhabit, dwell, as in *Charadrius hiaticula*, the Common Ringed Plover

## Hildebrandti *HIL-de-brant-eye*

After Johann Hildebrandt, German collector, as in *Pternistis hildebrandti*, Hildebrandt's Francolin

## Himantopus *him-an-TO-pus*

Greek, *himanto*, strap, and *pous*, foot, as in *Himantopus mexicanus*, the Black-necked Stilt, with long legs

## Himantornis *him-an-TOR-nis*

Greek, *himanto*, strap, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Himantornis haematopus*, the Nkulengu Rail

## Himatione *hib-ma-tee-OWN-ee*

Greek, cloak, as in *Himatione sanguinea*, the Apapane, whose plumage looks like a red cloak

## Hirsuta, -us *her-SOOT-a/us*

Hairy, rough, as in *Glaucis hirsutus*, the Rufous-breasted Hermit; immature birds of this species have hairy-looking throats

## Hirundapus *here-un-DAP-us*

*Hirund*, swallow, and Greek, *pous*, foot, as in *Hirundapus celebensis*, the Purple Needletail. Swifts and swallows resemble each other and have small feet

## Hirundinacea, -us, -um

*here-un-di-NACE-ee-a/us/um*

Like a swallow, as in *Euphonia hirundinacea*, the Yellow-throated Euphonia

## Hirundo *here-UN-do*

Swallow, as in *Hirundo rustica*, the Barn Swallow

## Hispaniolensis *biss-pan-ee-o-LEN-sis*

After Hispaniola, as in *Contopus hispaniolensis*, the Hispaniolan Pewee

## Histrionicus *biss-tree-ON-ih-kus*

Histrionic, from *histro*, actor, as in *Histrionicus histrionicus*, the Harlequin Duck, referring to its brightly patterned, clown-like feathers

## Hodgsoni *HOJ-son-eye*

After Brian Hodgson, an official of the East India Company, as in *Phoenicurus hodgsoni*, Hodgson's Redstart

## LATIN IN ACTION

Dohrn's Thrush-Babbler (*Horizorhinus dohrni*) is one of several birds whose ranges are so restricted and isolated that not much is known about them. Also called the Principe Flycatcher-babbler, it is restricted to the small islands of São Tomé and Príncipe off the west coast of Guinea. The only member of its genus *Horizorhinus* (horizontal bill), recent DNA information puts it in the genus *Sylvia* (inhabiting the woods), the Old World Warblers.

*Horizorhinus dohrni*,  
Dohrn's Thrush-Babbler



### Hoffmanni, -ii *HOF-man-nye/hof-MAN-nee-eye*

After Karl Hoffmann, German naturalist, as in *Pyrhura hoffmanni*, the Sulphur-winged Parakeet

### Holochlora, -us *hol-o-KLOR-a/us*

Greek, *holo*, whole, and *chlor*, green, as in *Psittacara holochlorus*, the Green Parakeet

### Holosericeus *hol-o-ser-ISS-ee-us*

Greek, *holo*, whole, and *seric*, silken, as in *Eulampis holosericeus*, the Green-throated Carib, which is silky smooth and iridescent over much of the body

### Homochroa, -us *ho-mo-KRO-a/us*

Greek, *homo*, like, same, and *chroa*, the skin, as in *Oceanodroma homochroa*, the Ashy Storm Petrel, which is ashy gray all over

### Horizorhinus *hor-ib-zo-RINE-us*

Greek, *horiz*, horizon, and *rhinos*, bill, as in *Horizorhinus dohrni*, Dohrn's Thrush-Babbler (see box)

### Hornemanni *HOR-ne-man-nye*

After Jens Hornemann, a Danish botanist, as in *Acanthis hornemanni*, the Arctic Redpoll

### Horus *HOR-us*

Egyptian sun god, as in *Apus horus*, the Horus Swift, so named probably because it flies high against the bright sky.

### Hottentottus *hot-ten-TOT-tus*

After the indigenous Khoi Khoi people of southern Africa, as in *Dicrurus hottentottus*, the Hair-crested Drongo

### Hudsonia *bud-SONE-ee-a*

After Hudson's Bay, Canada, as in *Pica hudsonia*, the Black-billed Magpie

### Hudsonicus, -a *bud-SON-ih-kus/ka*

After Hudson's Bay, Canada, as in *Poecile hudsonicus*, the Boreal Chickadee

### Humboldt *HUM-bolt-eye*

After Baron Alexander von Humboldt, Prussian naturalist and explorer, as in *Spheniscus humboldtii*, the Humboldt Penguin

### Humei *HEWM-eye*

After Allan Hume, writer on Indian birds, as in *Phylloscopus humei*, Hume's Leaf Warbler

### Humeralis *hoo-mer-AL-is*

Of the shoulder, as in *Agelaius humeralis*, the Tawny-shouldered Blackbird, referring to the colored epaulet

### Humilis *hoo-MIL-is*

Lowly, as in *Eupodotis humilis*, the Little Brown Bustard, which flies infrequently

### Hunteri *HUN-ter-eye*

After H. C. V. Hunter, English zoologist and big game hunter, as in *Cisticola hunteri*, Hunter's Cisticola

### Huttoni *HUT-ton-eye*

After William Hutton, collector, as in *Vireo huttoni*, Hutton's Vireo

### Hybrida *hy-BRID-a*

Hybrid, as in *Chlidonias hybrida*, the Whiskered Tern, hybrid probably referring to the variety of plumage and sizes in the various geographic races of the species

### Hydranassa *hy-dra-NASS-a*

Greek, *hydro*, water, and *anassa*, queen, as in *Hydranassa* (now *Egretta*) *tricolor*, the Tricolored Heron

**Hydrobates** *hy-ro-BA-teez*

Greek, *hydro*, water, and *bates*, one that walks or hunts, as in *Hydrobates pelagicus*, the European Storm Petrel

**Hydrocharis** *hy-dro-KAR-is*

Greek, *hydro*, water, and *charis*, favor, grace, as in *Tanysiptera hydrocharis*, the Little Paradise Kingfisher

**Hydrophasianus** *hy-dro-fas-ee-AN-us*

Greek, *hydro*, water, and Latin, *phasianus*, pheasant, as in *Hydrophasianus chirurgus*, the Pheasant-tailed Jacana, a water bird

**Hydroprogne** *hy-dro-PROG-nee*

Greek, *hydro*, water, and Latin, *progne*, swallow, as in *Hydroprogne caspia*, the Caspian Tern

**Hydropsalis** *hy-drop-SAL-is*

Greek, *hydro*, water, and *psalis*, scissors, as in *Hydropsalis torquata*, the Scissor-tailed Nightjar, which feeds over flooded grasslands during the tropical rainy season

**Hyemalis** *hy-eh-MAL-is*

*Hiems*, winter, and meaning wintry, as in *Junco hyemalis*, the Dark-eyed Junco, which nests in the far north of North America

**Hylocharis** *hy-lo-KAR-is*

Greek, *hyle*, woods, and *charis*, favor, grace, as in *Hylocharis* (now *Basilinna*) *leucotis*, the White-eared Hummingbird

**Hylocichla** *hy-lo-SICK-la*

Greek, *hyle*, woods, and *kichle*, thrush, as in *Hylocichla mustelina*, the Wood Thrush

**Hylocryptus** *hy-lo-KRIP-tus*

Greek, *hyle*, woods, and *crypt-*, hidden, as in *Hylocryptus rectirostris*, the Henna-capped Foliage-gleaner; presumably so-named because it is brownish and therefore hard to see

**Hylonympha** *hy-lo-NIM-fa*

Greek, *hyle*, woods, and *nympha*, nymph, as in *Hylonympha macrocerca*, the Scissor-tailed Hummingbird

**Hyperborea**, -us *hy-per-BOR-ee-a/us*

Greek, *hyper*, over, above, and *bore*, north, northern, as in *Larus hyperboreus*, the Glaucous Gull, referring to its home range

**Hyperythra**, -thrus *hy-per-IH-thra/thrus*

Greek, *hyper*, over, above, and *erythrus*, red, as in *Ficedula hyperythra*, the Snowy-browed Flycatcher, referring to its very red (orange) chest



*Hylonympha macrocerca*,  
Scissor-tailed Hummingbird

**Hypocnemius** *hy-pok-NEM-ee-us*

Greek, *hyper*, over, above, and *cnemi-*, lower leg, as in *Hypocnemius peruviana*, the Peruvian Warbling Antbird, whose legs seem long for its short tail

**Hypocondria** *hy-po-KON-dree-a*

Greek, *hyper*, over, above, and *khondros*, cartilage (of the breastbone), as in *Poospiza hypocondria*, the Rufous-sided Warbling Finch; refers to its rufous-sided chest

**Hypogrammica** *hy-po-GRAM-mi-ka*

Greek, *hyper*, over, above, and *grammikos*, lined, letter, as in *Pytilia hypogrammica*, the Yellow-winged Pytilia, with a lined/barred underside

**Hypoleuca**, -us *hy-po-LOY-ka/kus*

Greek, *hypo*, less than, and *leukos*, white, as in *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*, the Guadalupe (once Xantus's) Murrelet, as it has less white than the Marbled Murrelet

**Hypositta** *hy-po-SIT-ta*

Greek, *hypo*, less than, and *sitt-a*, nuthatch, as in *Hypositta corallirostris*, the Nuthatch Vanga

**Hypoxantha**, -us *hy-poks-ANTH-a/us*

Greek, *hypo*, less than, and *xanth*, yellow, as in *Chelidorhynch hypoxantha*, the Yellow-bellied Fantail



## I

**Ianthinogaster** *eye-an-thin-o-GAS-ter*

Greek, *ianthin-*, violet, and *gaster*, stomach, as in *Uraeginthus ianthinogaster*, the Purple Grenadier

**Ibericus** *eye-BER-ib-kus*

After Iberia (Spain and Portugal), as in *Phylloscopus ibericus*, the Iberian Chiffchaff

**Ibidorhyncha** *eye-bid-o-RINK-a*

Greek, *ibidos*, ibis, and *rhynch-*, bill, as in *Ibidorhyncha struthersii*, the Ibisbill

**Ibis** *EYE-bis*

Greek, *ibis*, stork-like bird, as in *Mycteria ibis*, the Yellow-billed Stork

**Ibycter** *eye-BICK-ter*

Greek, *ibu*, shout, *ibukter*, singer, as in *Ibycter americanus*, the Red-throated Caracara, with a loud and distinct call

**Ichthyaetus** *ik-thee-EE-tus*

Greek, *ichthy*, fish, and *aetus*, eagle, as in *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*, the Mediterranean Gull

**Ichthyophaga** *ik-thee-o-FAY-ga*

Greek, *ichthy*, fish, and *phagein*, eat, as in *Ichthyophaga* (now *Haliaeetus*) *humilis*, the Lesser Fish Eagle

**Icteria** *ik-TER-ee-a*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, as in *Icteria virens*, the Yellow-breasted Chat

**Icterina**, -us *ik-ter-EE-na/nus*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, as in *Hippolais icterina*, the Icterine Warbler, a pale yellow bird

**Icterocephala**, -us *ik-ter-o-se-FAL-a/us*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Tangara icterocephala*, the Silver-throated Tanager, with a yellow head

**Icterophrys** *ik-ter-O-friss*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, and *oprys*, eyebrow, as in *Satrapia icterophrys*, the Yellow-browed Tyrant

**Icteropygialis** *ik-ter-o-pij-ee-AL-is*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, and *puge*, rump, as in *Eremomela icteropygialis*, the Yellow-bellied Eremomela

**Icterorhynchus** *ik-ter-o-RINK-us*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Otus icterorhynchus*, the Sandy Scops Owl, with a yellow bill

**Icterotis** *ik-ter-O-tis*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, and *otid*, ear, as in *Ognorhynchus icterotis*, the Yellow-eared Parrot

**Icterus** *IK-ter-us*

Greek, *ikteros*, yellow, as in *Icterus spurius*, the Orchard Oriole: myth has it that the sight of an oriole would cure jaundice

**Ictinaetus** *ik-tin-EE-tus*

Greek, *iktinos*, a kite, and *aetus*, an eagle, as in *Ictinaetus malaiensis*, the Black Eagle



*Icterus spurius*,  
Orchard Oriole

# L A T I N I N A C T I O N

The Short-tailed Finch is a bird with a short tail that resembles a starling, as described by its scientific name, *Idiopsar brachyurus*. It is the only one in its genus and one of those species with a limited distribution, in this case the high Andes of Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina, at elevations of 10,800 to 15,000 feet (3,300 to 4,600 meters), in a treeless, rocky steppe habitat. Now a member of the family Emberizidae (the buntings and sparrows), it was once considered part of the blackbird family (Icteridae). This debate has been going on since 1886, when the bird was first described.

*Idiopsar brachyurus*,  
Short-tailed Finch



## Ictinia *ik-TIN-ee-a*

Greek, *iktinos*, a kite, as in *Ictinia plumbea*, the Plumbeous Kite; bird kites were named after children's toy kites because of the way they fly

## Idiopsar *id-ee-OP-sar*

Greek, *idio*, peculiar, and *psar*, speckled or starling, as in *Idiopsar brachyurus*, the Short-tailed Finch (see box), which vaguely resembles a starling

## Ifrita *eye-FRIT-a*

After *ifrit*, supernatural creatures of fire in Arabic and Islamic culture, as in *Ifrita kowaldi*, the Blue-capped Ifrit. This genus is one of only three to contain poisonous birds

## Igneus *IG-nee-us*

Fiery, as in *Pericrocotus igneus*, the Fiery Minivet

## Ignicapilla *ig-ni-ka-PIL-la*

*Ignis*, fire, and *capilla*, hair, as in *Regulus ignicapilla*, the Common Firecrest

## Ignicauda *ig-ni-KAW-da*

*Ignis*, fire, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Aethopyga ignicauda*, the Fire-tailed Sunbird

## Ignipectus *ig-ni-PEK-tus*

*Ignis*, fire, and *pectus*, breast, as in *Dicaeum ignipectus*, the Fire-breasted Flowerpecker

## Ignobilis *ig-NO-bil-is*

Undistinguished, of low birth, obscure, as in *Turdus ignobilis*, the Black-billed Thrush, a plain-colored bird

## Iheringi *EER-ing-eye*

After Hermann von Ihering, a German ornithologist, as in *Myrmotherula iheringi*, Ihering's Antwren

## Ijimai *ee-JEE-mee*

After I. Ijima, first president of the Ornithological Society of Japan, as in *Phylloscopus ijimai*, the Ijima's Leaf Warbler

## Iliaca, -us *il-ee-AK-a/us*

After *ilia*-, the flank, loin, as in *Passerella iliaca*, the Fox Sparrow, so named because its most northern population is fox-colored; *iliaca* refers to the heavily streaked flanks

## Illicura *il-ih-KOO-ra*

Greek, *helix*, curl, twist, and *oura*, tail, as in *Illicura militaris*, the Pin-tailed Manakin, named for its central pintail feathers and its plumage, which resembles a military uniform

## Illadopsis *il-la-DOP-sis*

Greek, *illis*, thrush, and *opsis*, appearance, as in *Illadopsis cleaveri*, the Blackcap Illadopsis

## Immaculata, -us *im-mak-oo-LAT-a/us*

Immaculate, as in *Myrmeciza immaculata*, the Blue-lored Antbird, immaculate perhaps because of its uniform plumage







*Tityra inquisitor*,  
Black-crowned Tityra

## Indus *IN-dus*

India, as in *Haliastur indus*, the Brahminy Kite or Red-backed Sea Eagle

## Ineptus *in-EP-ta*

*Ineptus*, silly, foolish, as in *Megacrex inepta*, the New Guinea Flightless Rail, named for its inability to fly away from threats

## Inexpectata *in-eks-pek-TA-ta*

Unexpected, as in *Pterodroma inexpectata*, the Mottled Petrel, native to New Zealand but occurs unexpectedly in other areas

## Infelix *in-FEL-iks*

Unhappy, unfortunate, as in *Symposiachrus infelix*, the Manus Monarch. The type specimen upon which the species was named is said to have been in a sad condition, having been badly shot

## Infuscata, -us *in-foos-KAT-a/us*

Dusky, darkened, as in *Aerodramus infuscatus*, the Halmahera Swiftlet

## Ingens *IN-jenz*

Large, remarkable, as in *Megascops ingens*, the Rufescent Screech Owl, one of the larger species of screech owls

## Inornatus, -a *in-or-NAT-us/a*

Without adornments, plain, as in *Baeolophus inornatus*, the Oak Titmouse, formerly the Plain Titmouse

## Inquieta, -ius *in-kwee-EH-ta/ee-us*

Restless, agitated, as in *Myiagra inquieta*, the Restless Flycatcher

## Inquisitor *in-KWI-zi-tor*

Inquisitor, investigator, as in *Tityra inquisitor*, the Black-crowned Tityra; probably from their head movements when foraging

## Insignis *in-SIG-nis*

Conspicuous, eminent, as in *Ardea insignis*, the White-bellied Heron or Imperial Heron

## Insularis *in-soo-LAR-is*

*Insula*, island, as in *Passer insularis*, the Socotra Sparrow of three islands in the Indian Ocean

## Intermedia *in-ter-MEE-dee-a*

*Intermedius*, intermediate, as in *Egretta intermedia*, the Intermediate Egret, a medium-sized heron

## Internigrans *in-ter-NYE-granz*

*Inter*, between, among, and *nig*, dark, black, as in *Perisoreus internigrans*, the Sichuan Jay, which is various shades of black and gray

## Interpres *IN-ter-press*

*Inter*, between, and *pre-*, before, go-between, broker, as in *Arenaria interpres*, the Ruddy Turnstone, for its habit of turning over stones

## Involucris *in-vo-LOO-kris*

*Involucre*, to wrap, as in *Ixobrychus involucris*, the Striped-backed Bittern

## Iodopleura *eye-o-doe-PLUR-a*

Greek, *iodo*, violet, and *pleura*, side, as in *Iodopleura pipra*, the Buff-throated Purplethroat

*Ixobrychus involucris*,

Striped-backed Bittern



**Iole** *eye-O-lee*

Greek, mythical daughter of Eurytus, as in *Iole virescens*, the Olive Bulbul, the common name deriving from Persian for nightingale

**Iphis** *EYE-fiss*

Greek, mightily, strongly, as in *Pomarea iphis*, the Iphis Monarch

**Irania** *ee-RAHN-ee-a*

After Iran, as in *Irania gutturalis*, the White-throated Robin (actually an Old World flycatcher)

**Irena** *ee-REN-a*

Greek goddess of peace, as in *Irena puella*, the Asian Fairy-bluebird

**Iriditorques** *ih-rid-ih-TOR-kweez*

*Iris*, rainbow, and *torques*, collar, as in *Columba iriditorques*, the Western Bronze-naped Pigeon

**Iridophanes** *ih-rid-o-FAN-eez*

*Iris*, rainbow, and Greek, *phane*, visible, as in *Iridophanes pulcherrimus*, the Golden-collared Honeycreeper

**Iridoprocne** *ih-rid-o-PROK-nee*

*Iris*, rainbow, and *Procne*, who in Greek mythology was turned into a swallow by the gods, as in *Iridoprocne* (now *Tachycineta*) *bicolor*, the Tree Swallow

**Iridosornis** *ih-rid-o-SOR-nis*

*Iris*, rainbow, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Iridosornis rufivertex*, the Golden-crowned Tanager

**Iris** *EYE-ris*

Rainbow, as in *Pitta iris*, the Rainbow Pitta

**Isabellae** *ih-sa-BEL-lee*

After Queen Isabel of Spain, as in *Oriolus isabellae*, the Isabela Oriole

**Isidori** *iz-ih-DOR-eye*

After Isidore Geoffroy St. Hilaire, French zoologist and collector, as in *Spizaetus isidori*, Black-and-chestnut Eagle

**Islandica** *iss-LAN-dik-a*

After Iceland, as in *Bucephala islandica*, Barrow's Goldeneye

**Ispidina** *iss-pi-DEEN-a*

From *hispidus*, rough, shaggy, hairy, as in *Ispidina picta*, the African Pygmy Kingfisher

## LATIN IN ACTION

The Sunda Bulbul (*Ixos virescens*) lives in Sumatra and Java, in Indonesia. Sunda comes from the name of the strait connecting the Java Sea to the Indian Ocean. Bulbul derives from the Persian *bolbol*, and means nightingale, although the bulbul does not belong to the nightingale family but to Pycnonotidae, the bulbuls and greenbulbs. Named after mistletoe, it also eats a variety of fruits as well as insects, spiders, and other arthropods.

A gregarious species, the Sunda Bulbul often forages in flocks of three to six birds of its own species as well as mixed species flocks, which it seems to prefer.



*Ixos virescens*,  
Sunda Bulbul

**Ixobrychus** *iks-o-BRICK-us*

Greek, *iksos*, and *brykein*, to devour, as in *Ixobrychus exilis*, the Least Bittern

**Ixoreus** *iks-OR-ee-us*

Greek, *iksos*, mistletoe, and *oro*, a mountain, as in *Ixoreus naevius*, the Varied Thrush, referring to its preferred mountain habitat and diet

**Ixos** *IKS-os*

Greek, *iksos*, mistletoe, as in *Ixos virescens*, the Sunda Bulbul (see box)

# JAMES BOND

## (1900–1989)

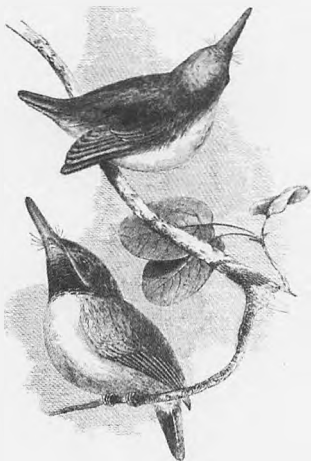
Bird watchers may be surprised to discover that the original, real, James Bond, after whom Ian Fleming's fictional character was named, was one of their own. Bond was born January 4, 1900, in Philadelphia, but when his mother died in 1914, he moved to England with his British-born father. There he went to private school and then to Cambridge University, completing his degree in 1922.

His interest in ornithology was sparked by his ornithologist father's expedition to the Orinoco Delta right after graduation. He returned to the US, and spent three years working as a banker, but his interest in natural history led him to take on a role in an expedition sponsored by the Academy of Natural Sciences, which involved surveying the birds of the West Indies. He travelled extensively through the islands for many decades, spending long periods in Cuba and Hispaniola. "Virtually the entire area was

explored fairly thoroughly with the exception of some of the more southern Bahamas," he wrote in 1960. "Of the native West Indian species of birds and those known to have been successfully introduced I encountered approximately 98 percent in life."

He led a series of trips to document avian species throughout the Caribbean. One island that fascinated him was Jamaica, where he noticed that many of the bird species native to that island originated from North America, and not South America as had been originally assumed. Later trips to Jamaica and other Caribbean islands led him to the theory that the boundary between North and South American species lay off the northeast coast of Venezuela and Columbia, now called the Bond Line. Bond wrote up the seminal book of Caribbean bird-watching, *Birds of the West Indies*, originally published in 1936 and for many years the only definitive bird identification book of the area. He visited more than 100 islands and collected 294 of the 300 bird species there, often while plying the water around the islands in makeshift canoes. He ultimately wrote more than 100 scientific papers on Caribbean birds.

His *Birds of the West Indies* was widely read by bird-watchers in the Caribbean area. One such bird-watcher, Ian Fleming, had an estate on the north coast of Jamaica and used Bond's book as a guide for his birding forays. His selection of Bond's name for the hero of his spy novels made the name, if not



*Todus todus*,  
Jamaican Tody

The Jamaican Tody is endemic to Jamaica;  
*todillus* is Latin for small bird.



"The country seems very large!"

*James Bond, aged 53. He made this remark en route to Michigan, travelling west of Philadelphia for the first time.*

the man, famous. Fleming chose the name because he liked its strength and simplicity, and figured that the real Bond had no objections, although he was not asked. Bond did not even notice for several years.

The popularity of Fleming's books eventually caused some consternation to the ornithologist. Bond's wife Mary wrote jokingly to Fleming that she was appalled that in the novel *Dr. No*, the wily rascal was named James Bond. In response, Fleming said that James could sue if he wished or "Perhaps one day he will discover some particularly horrible species of bird which he would like to christen in an insulting fashion." Interestingly, Fleming used a bird sanctuary on Crab Key on Inagua Island in the Bahamas as the setting for *Dr. No*.

In 1964 James and his wife Mary were in the Caribbean to continue research on bird species and decided to pay a surprise visit to Ian Fleming, who had on the first exchange of letters invited them to his estate in Jamaica. Fleming was very ill, with about six months to live. By chance the BBC was doing an interview with Fleming, who had become almost as famous as the fictional James Bond, so they were able to film the one and only meeting between these two authors. At first Fleming was somewhat suspicious, asking Bond to identify some of the birds they saw on the premises. But once Bond passed the test, this was probably the best day Fleming would have for the rest of his life.

During a full professional life, Bond was a curator at the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, a fellow of the American Ornithologists' Union, and a member of the British Ornithologists' Union. In 1952 he received the Musgrave Medal from the Institute of Jamaica, and in 1954 he was awarded the William Brewster Memorial Award, the most prestigious accolade in American ornithology, by the American Ornithologists' Union for his work on West Indian birds, and the Leidy Medal of the Academy of Natural Sciences in 1975.

He died in Philadelphia at age 89.



*Ardea herodias*,  
Great Blue Heron

A Great Blue Heron in Galapagos National Park has been nicknamed James Bond because its band/ring number is 007.

## J

**Jabiru** *ja-BEER-oo*

From Tupi (indigenous to Brazil), swollen neck, as in *Jabiru mycteria*, the Jabiru; the head and upper neck are naked and black, with a naked leather-like red expandable pouch at the base

**Jacamaralcyon** *jak-a-mar-AL-see-on*

*Jacamar*, from Tupi (indigenous to Brazil), and Greek, *alkyon*, kingfisher, as in *Jacamaralcyon tridactyla*, the Three-toed Jacamar

**Jacamerops** *ja-ka-MER-ops*

*Jacamar*, from Tupi (indigenous to Brazil), and *merops*, bee, as in *Jacamerops aureus*, the Great Jacamar

**Jacana** *ja-KA-na*

Tupi-Guarani language, as in *Jacana spinosa*, the Northern Jacana

**Jacarina** *ja-ka-REEN-a*

Tupi name for one who jumps up and down, as in *Volatinia jacarina*, the Blue-black Grassquit, the male of which jumps into the air while singing

*Buteo jamaicensis*,  
Red-tailed Hawk

**Jacksoni** *JAK-son-eye*

After Frederick Jackson, English administrator, naturalist, and ornithologist, as in *Tockus jacksoni*, Jackson's Hornbill

**Jacobinus** *ja-ko-BINE-us*

After Dominican friars or Jacobins, as in *Clamator jacobinus*, the Jacobin or Pied Cuckoo; both the friars and the birds are white with a black "cloak"

**Jacquinoti** *jak-kwee-NOTE-eye*

After Charles Jacquinot, French explorer, as in *Ninox jacquinoti*, the Solomons Boobook

**Jacucaca** *ja-koo-KA-ka*

Tupi name, as in *Penelope jacucaca*, the White-browed Guan

**Jacula** *ja-KOO-La*

*Jacul*-, throw, as in *Heliodoxa jacula*, the Green-crowned Brilliant; large for a hummingbird, it feeds while perched but darts to other perches

**Jamaicensis** *ja-may-SEN-sis*

After Jamaica, as in *Buteo jamaicensis*, the Red-tailed Hawk

**Jambu** *JAM-boo*

Sanskrit, rose-apple tree, as in *Ptilinopus jambu*, the Jambu Fruit Dove

**Jamesi** *JAMEZ-eye*

After Henry James, a British businessman, as in *Phoenicoparrus jamesi*, James's Flamingo

**Jamesoni** *JAY-meh-son-eye*

After James Jameson, Irish hunter and naturalist, as in *Platysteira jamesoni*, Jameson's Wattle-eye

**Jankowskii** *jan-KOW-skee-eye*

After Michael Jankowski, Polish zoologist, as in *Emberiza jankowskii*, Jankowski's Bunting

**Janthina** *jan-THEEN-a*

Greek, *ianthinos*, violet-colored, as in *Columba janthina*, the Japanese Wood Pigeon

**Japonica**, -us, *ja-PON-ik-a/us*

Of Japan, as in *Zosterops japonicus*, the Japanese White-eye

**Jardineii**, -i *jar-DINE-ee-eye/jar-DINE-ee*

After William Jardine, Scottish ornithologist, as in *Turdoides jardineii*, the Arrow-marked Babbler

**Javanica**, -us *ja-VAN-ih-ka/kus*

Of Java, as in *Rhipidura javanica*, the Malaysian Pied Fantail

**Jelskii** *JEL-skee-eye*

After Konstanty Jelski, Polish ornithologist, as in *Silvicultrix jelskii*, Jelski's Chat-Tyrant

**Jerdoni** *JER-don-eye*

After Thomas Jerdon, British physician and naturalist, as in *Aviceda jerdoni*, Jerdon's Baza

**Jocosus** *jo-KO-sus*

Full of fun, as in *Pycnonotus jocosus*, the Red-whiskered Bulbul

**Johannae** *jo-HAN-nee*

After Johanna Verreaux, wife of Jules Verreaux, as in *Cinnyris johannae*, Johanna's Sunbird

**Jefferyi** *JEF-free-eye*

After the father of John Whitehead, English explorer and naturalist, and professional collector, Jeffery Whitehead, as in *Pitheophaga jefferyi*, the Philippine Eagle

**Johnstoni** *JON-stun-eye*

After Harry Johnston, English explorer and administrator, as in *Ruwenzorornis johnstoni*, Ruwenzori Turaco

**Johnstoniae** *jon-STONE-ee-eye*

After Marion Johnstone, famous aviculturist, as in *Tarsiger johnstoniae*, the Collared Bush Robin

**Jonquillaceus** *jon-kwil-LACE-ee-us*

French, narcissus, as in *Aprosmictus jonquillaceus*, the Jonquil Parrot; perhaps because of the yellowish-olive wing coverts that resemble the yellow of narcissus

**Josefinae/Josephinae** *jo-seh-FIN-ee*

After the wife of German ornithologist Friedrich Finsch, as in *Chamosyna josefinae*, Josephine's Lorikeet; and as in *Hemitriccus josephinae*, the Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant

**Jourdanii** *joor-DAN-ee-eye*

After a collector in Trinidad, as in *Chaetocercus jourdanii*, the Rufous-shafted Woodstar

**Jouyi** *JOO-ee-eye*

After Pierre Jouy, American diplomat and naturalist, as in *Columba jouyi*, the extinct Ryukyu Wood Pigeon



*Jynx ruficollis*,  
Red-throated Wryneck

**Jubata**, -us, -ula *joo-BAT-a/us/joo-ba-TOO-la*

*Jubatus*, a crest or mane, as in *Chenonetta jubata*, the Australian Wood Duck/Maned Duck

**Jugularis** *jug-oo-LAR-is*

*Jugularis*, of the collarbone, throat, neck, as in *Brotogeris jugularis*, the Orange-chinned Parakeet

**Julie** *JOO-lee*

After Julie Mulsant, wife of the French naturalist, Martial Mulsant, as in *Damophila julie*, the Violet-bellied Hummingbird

**Juncidis** *jun-SID-is*

*Juncus*, rush, as in *Cisticola juncidis*, the Zitting Cisticola or Fan-tailed Warbler, found in grasslands, often near water

**Junco** *JUNK-o*

*Juncus*, rush, as in *Junco hyemalis*, the Dark-eyed Junco. An odd generic name as they are not wetland birds

**Jynx** *JINKS*

Wryneck, as in *Jynx ruficollis*, the Red-throated Wryneck, with a very flexible neck



## K

**Kaempferi** *KEMP-fer-eye*

After Emil Kaempfer, German collector, as in *Hemitriccus kaempferi*, Kaempfer's Tody-Tyrant

**Kaestneri** *KEST-ner-eye*

After Peter Kaestner, American diplomat, as in *Grallaria kaestneri*, the Cundinamarca Antpitta, after Cundinamarca, Colombia

**Kakamega** *ka-ka-MAY-ga*

After the Kakamega Rainforest in Kenya, as in *Kakamega poliothorax*, the Gray-chested Babbler

**Kansuensis** *kan-su-EN-sis*

After Kansu/Gansu Province, China, as in *Phylloscopus kansuensis*, the Gansu Leaf Warbler

**Kandti** *KANT-eye*

After Richard Kandt, German physician and explorer, as in *Estrilda kandti*, Kandt's Waxbill

**Kaupifalco** *kaw-pi-FAL-ko*

After Johann Kaup and *falco*, falcon, as in *Kaupifalco monogrammicus*, the Lizard Buzzard

**Kawalli** *KA-wal-lye*

After Nelson Kawall, Brazilian aviculturist, as in *Amazona kawalli*, Kawall's, or White-faced, Amazon

**Kelleyi** *KEL-lee-eye*

After W. V. Kelley, American philanthropist, as in *Macronus kellyi*, the Gray-faced Tit-Babbler

**Kempi** *KEMP-eye*

After Robert Kemp, American naturalist and collector, as in *Macrosphenus kempii*, Kemp's Longbill

**Kennicotti** *KEN-ih-kot-tye*

After Robert Kennicott, American Naturalist, as in *Megascops kennicotti*, the Western Screech Owl

**Kenricki** *KEN-rik-eye*

After R. W. E. Kenrick, British Army officer, as in *Poeyptera kenricki*, Kenrick's Starling



*Macrosphenus kempii*,  
Kemp's Longbill

**Keraudrenii** *ke-raw-DREN-ee-eye*

After Pierre Keraudren, French physician, as in *Phonygamus keraudrenii*, the Trumpet Manucode

**Ketupu** *ke-TOO-poo*

Malay name for bird, as in *Ketupa ketupu*, the Buffy Fish Owl

**Kienerii**, -i *kee-NAIR-ee-eye/KEEN-er-eye*

After Louis-Charles Kiener, French malacologist (study of molluscs), as in *Lophoriorchis kienerii*, the Rufous-bellied Hawk-Eagle

**Kilimensis** *ki-li-MEN-sis*

After Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, as in *Nectarinia kilimensis*, the Bronzy Sunbird

**Kirhocephalus** *keer-ho-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *kirrhos*, tawny, orange-colored, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Pitohui kirhocephalus*, the Northern Variable Pitohui, with a mostly orange body and black head

**Kirki** *KIRK-eye*

After John Kirk, Scottish physician and administrator, as in *Zosterops kirki*, Kirk's White-eye

**Kirtlandii** *kirt-LAN-dee-eye*

After Jared Kirtland, American doctor, naturalist, and botanist, as in *Setophaga kirtlandii*, Kirtland's Warbler

**Klaas** *KLAAS*

After a famous servant who apparently discovered the bird, as in *Chrysococcyx klaas*, Klaas's Cuckoo

**Klagesi** *KLAIGS-eye*

After Samuel Klages, American collector, as in  
*Myrmotherula klagesi*, Klages's Antwren

**Knipolegus** *ni-po-LAY-gus*

Greek, *knipos*, insect, and *legus*, choose, as in *Knipolegus signatus*,  
the Andean Tyrant

**Kochi** *KOCK-eye*

After Gottlieb von Koch, German collector and taxidermist,  
as in *Erythropitta kochi*, the Whiskered Pitta

**Koepckeae** *KEP-kee-ee*

After Maria Koepcke, Mother of Peruvian ornithology,  
as in *Cacicus koepckae*, the Selva Cacique

**Komadori** *kom-a-DOR-eye*

Japanese for Red Robin, as in *Erithacus komadori*,  
the Ryukyu Robin

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

The Whiskered Pitta, *Erythropitta kochi*, is an unusually beautiful bird, with a bright-red lower chest and abdomen, and topped by an iridescent upper chest and throat, a brown head, and greenish back. Pitta is from a language of southern India and parts of Sri Lanka and means pretty bauble; certainly very descriptive of this bird.

*Erythropitta kochi*,  
Whiskered Pitta



*Sitta krueperi*,  
Krüper's Nuthatch

**Kona** *KO-na*

From the Hawaiian Islands, as in *Chloridops kona*,  
the Kona Grosbeak

**Kori** *KOR-eye*

From Setswana (South African language) *kgori*, as in  
*Ardeotis kori*, the Kori Bustard; Bustard may have come  
from the Latin *aves tarda*, slow bird

**Kozlowi** *KOZ-low-eye*

After Pyotr Kozlov, Russian explorer, as in *Prunella kozlowi*,  
the Mongolian Accentor

**Kretschmeri** *KRETCH-mer-eye*

After Eugen Kretschmer, a German collector, as in *Macrosphenus kretschmeri*, Kretschmer's Longbill

**Krueperi** *KRUE-per-eye*

After Theobald Krüper, German ornithologist, as in *Sitta krueperi*,  
Krüper's Nuthatch

**Kubaryi** *koo-BARY-eye*

After Jan Kubary, Polish explorer, as in *Corvus kubaryi*,  
the Mariana Crow

**Kuehni** *KOON-eye*

After Heinrich Kühn, German naturalist, as in *Myzomela kuehni*,  
the Crimson-hooded Myzomela

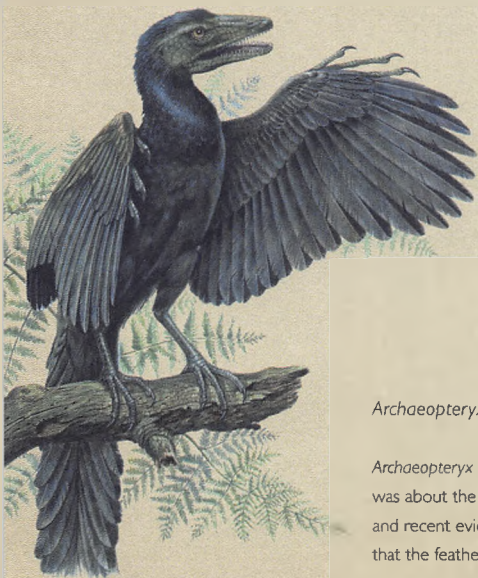
**Kupeornis** *koo-pee-OR-nis*

From Mt. Kupe in the Cameroon, and Greek, *ornis*, bird, as in  
*Kupeornis gilberti*, the White-throated Mountain Babbler

# Feathers

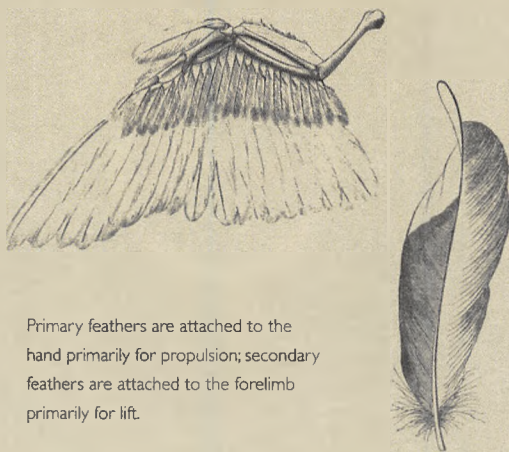
Like mammals, birds are homeothermic (warm-blooded); like many reptiles, amphibians, fish, and a couple of mammals, they lay eggs. They show parental care, as do mammals and some reptiles and fish; they migrate, as do some mammals and fish. But unlike other animal groups, birds are very recognizable because their characteristics are fairly homogeneous, and uniquely they have feathers. If an animal has feathers, it is a bird.

Often called the first bird, *Archaeopteryx* (ancient wing) *lithographica* is a creature that lived about 150 million years ago. Eleven fossils have been recovered from a limestone quarry in Germany, hence the specific epithet *lithographica*, limestone being used in making lithographs. *Archaeopteryx lithographica* was clearly an intermediate form between dinosaurs and birds as it had teeth, a long bony tail, claws on its hands, and other reptilian characteristics, but it also had well-developed feathers. Whether it could fly or just glide is the object of speculation, but flight-like feathers are present.



*Archaeopteryx lithographica*

*Archaeopteryx lithographica* was about the size of a raven and recent evidence indicates that the feathers were black.



Primary feathers are attached to the hand primarily for propulsion; secondary feathers are attached to the forelimb primarily for lift.

Feathers first evolved not for flight but for insulation. In the changes dinosaurs experienced over millions of years, there is evidence that they were developing homeothermic capabilities—becoming warm-blooded. To do that, bodies needed something to prevent rapid heat loss. Scales and feathers are made of keratin so it is likely that scales elongated, split, and became thinner, evolving into the prototype of feathers. Only many years later did feathers elongate enough for gliding and then powered flight.

As feathers evolved, they differentiated into various forms for diverse purposes. The down feathers, as we know, perform the original feather function of insulation. Flight feathers, those of the hand, serve to propel the bird through the air (or water in the case of swimmers) in a figure eight fashion, as seen from the side. Other feathers attached to the arm provide lift like an airplane wing. The tail feathers serve both as rudder and brake. Feathers called contour feathers cover the body to make it smooth and aerodynamic. Semiplumes—feathers structurally intermediate between down and contour feathers—help both in waterproofing and giving the bird a sleek profile.



All of these feathers need to be preened and oiled to avoid becoming matted or waterlogged. A “preen” gland on the top of the tail base produces oil that the bird squeezes out and runs over its feathers. Powder down, found in some birds like herons and egrets, are feathers whose ends break off into talc-like particles that along with preen gland oil help waterproof feathers.

Specialized feathers like filoplumes (those “hairs” you see on a plucked chicken) provide the bird with information about the position of its body feathers. Rictal bristles at the sides of the jaw apparently serve to tell a flying bird about its position in the air as well as its speed.

Insulation first, flight second, and then camouflage or courtship are the evolving uses of feathers. Birds have developed extremely clever ways of hiding themselves from predators by being cryptically colored. For example, many plovers disrupt their outlines with breastbands; the females of many

*Onychorhynchus coronatus*,  
Amazonian Royal Flycatcher

The Royal Flycatcher male has a showy crest that it only raises during mating and preening.



species just use dull plumage. On the other extreme, many male birds use elaborate plumages with bright, even iridescent colors to establish a territory, attract females, and defend their nest site. Plumes, fans, bristles, crests, elongated tails, and an endless variety of patterns and colors decorate birds. The lyrebird, turkey, and peacock all display large, fancy tails. The Amazonian Royal Flycatcher, *Onychorhynchus coronatus*, can display a large, bright, fan-shaped crest when in the mood, and the Kagu, *Rhynochetos jubatus*, can raise its long head feathers, usually draped down the back of its neck.

Since feathers can comprise 20 percent of the weight of a bird, they are clearly important. Why, otherwise, would a hummingbird sprout 1,000 of them and a swan 25,000?

There are a number of Latin and Greek suffixes that refer to feathers in some way: *petryl*, *ptero*, *ptilo*, *ptin*, *pinna*, and *penna*, a feather or wing; *pinnat-*, *ptin*, feathered; *ala*, *ali-*, wing, *alat-*, *pten*, winged.

*Pavo cristatus*,  
Indian Peafowl

The “eyed” tail feathers of the peacock are shed yearly and increase in length and number with maturity.



## L

Labradorius *la-bra-DOR-ee-us*

After Labrador, Canada, as in the now extinct *Camptorhynchus labradorius*, the Labrador Duck

Lactea *LAK-tee-a*

*Lacte*, milk, as in *Polioptila lactea*, the Creamy-bellied Gnatcatcher

Laeta *LEE-ta*

Gay, pleasing, as in *Cercomacra laeta*, Willis's Antbird

Lafayetii *la-fye-ET-eye*

After Marie du Mothier, Marquis de Lafayette, as in *Gallus lafayetii*, the Sri Lanka Junglefowl

Lafresnayi *la-FREZ-nay-eye*

After Noel Andre de La Fresne, French ornithologist and collector, as in *Picumnus lafresnayi*, Lafresnaye's Piculet

Lagdeni *LAG-den-eye*

After Godfrey Lagden, English diplomat, as in *Malaconotus lagdeni*, Lagden's Bushshrike

Lagonosticta *la-go-no-STICK-ta*

Greek, *lagonos*, flank, and *stiktos*, spotted, dotted, as in *Lagonosticta rufopicta*, the Bar-breasted Firefinch

Lagopus *la-GO-pus*

Greek, *lagos*, hare, and *pous*, foot, as in *Lagopus lagopus*, the Willow Ptarmigan, with feathery feet that help it to walk on soft snow

Lalage *la-LA-jee*

Lallo, perhaps a girl's name, as in *Lalage nigra*, the Pied Triller

Lampornis *lam-POR-nis*

Greek, *lampro*, a torch, light, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Lampornis viridipallens*, the Green-throated Mountaingem; the name probably refers to its attractive plumage

Lamprolaima *lam-pro-LAY-ma*

Greek, *lampro*, shining, and *laima*, throat, as in *Lamprolaima rhami*, the Garnet-throated Hummingbird

Lamprolia *lam-PROL-ee-a*

Greek, *lampro*, shining, as in *Lamprolia victoriae*, the Silktail, with a bright white rump that stands out like a light

Lamprosar *lam-PROP-sar*

Greek, *lampro*, shining, and *psar*, starling, as in *Lamprosar tanagrinus*, the Velvet-fronted Grackle, an iridescent bird that resembles a starling

Lamprospiza *lam-pro-SPY-za*

Greek, *lampro*, shining, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Lamprospiza melanoleuca*, the Red-billed Pied Tanager, a brightly colored tanager that somewhat resembles a finch

Lamprotornis *lam-pro-TOR-nis*

Greek, *lampro*, shining, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Lamprotornis ornatus*, the Principe Starling, a metallic-plumaged bird

Lanaiensis *lan-eye-EN-sis*

After Lanai, Hawaii, as in *Myadestes lanaiensis*, the Olomao

Lanceolata, -us *lan-see-o-LAT-a/us*

Shaped like a spear, as in *Chiroxiphia lanceolata*, the Lance-tailed Manakin, alluding to its central tail feathers

Langsdorffi *LANGZ-dorf-fye*

After Georg von Langsdorff, German physician and naturalist, as in *Discosura langsdorffi*, the Black-bellied Thorntail

Languida *lan-GWEE-da*

Weak, faint, as in *Hippolais languida*, Upcher's Warbler, perhaps because of its slow, deliberate movements

Laniarius *lan-ee-AR-ee-us*

*Lanius*, butcher, and *arius*, pertaining to, as in *Laniarius ruficeps*, the Red-naped Bushshrike

*Gallus lafayetii*,  
Sri Lanka Junglefowl





# LANIUS

The Latin word for butcher, *Lanius* (*LAN-ee-us*), is an oft-applied name for birds in the family Laniidae. The genus contains 27 species, mostly called shrikes, a name that may come from the Old English *scric*, referring to a bird with a shrill call. Some in the genus are called fiscals, after an Afrikaans word *fiskaal*, a public official, particularly a hangman.

Shrikes are carnivorous birds with a hooked upper bill they use to prey on large insects and small vertebrates. They impale their prey on thorns, spines, or barbed wire, for eating later, hence the comparisons with hangmen and butchers.

Shrikes require two types of perches, one for hunting and one for evening roosting. The birds sit upright on their diurnal perch and swoop down on prey with rapid wingbeats. They are very territorial and require a variety of perch heights. In agricultural areas their territories are larger due to a restricted choice of perches and a lower density of potential prey. During the breeding season, male shrikes will store food items in a cache. One study of Northern or Great Gray Shrikes (*L. excubitor*, Latin for sentinel) discovered that the cache of impaled prey increased as the breeding season progressed, peaked when nests were built and eggs laid, and decreased when young and mates were fed. The conclusion was that males with bigger prey caches were more successful in attracting females and raising young.

Most songbirds sing only during the breeding season, but both sexes of the Northern Shrike sing for much of the year, including winter. It turns out



*Lanius mackinnoni*  
Mackinnon's Shrike

that the Northern Shrike mimics the calls of songbirds, one of its major prey items, in order to attract them. As carnivores, shrikes eat not only birds but also a variety of invertebrates, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians, mostly smaller than the shrike but occasionally larger. Like many raptors,

shrikes regurgitate pellets of indigestible material. The Red-backed Shrike, *L. collurio*, is sometimes called Nine-killer because it was once thought they killed nine animals before eating them. Its German name is *Neuntoeter* (nine killer).



*Lanius isabellinus*,  
Isabelline Shrike



## Laniisoma *lan-ee-eye-SO-ma*

*Lanius*, butcher, and Greek, *soma*, body, as in *Laniisoma elegans*, the shrike-like Brazilian Laniisoma

## Lanio *LAN-ee-o*

*Lanius*, butcher, as in *Lanio fulvus*, the Fulvous Shrike-Tanager

## Laniocera *lan-ee-o-SER-a*

*Lanius*, butcher, and *cera*, wax, as in *Laniocera rufescens*, the Speckled Mourner; *cera* refers to the bill and derives from the Greek *keras*, horn, or bill, as the bill appears waxy

## Lanioturdus *lan-ee-o-TUR-dus*

*Lanius*, butcher, and *turdus*, thrush, as in *Lanioturdus torquatus*, the White-tailed Shrike

## Lanius *LAN-ee-us*

Butcher, as in *Lanius cristatus*, the Brown Shrike

## Lapponica, -us *lap-PON-i-ka/kus*

Lapland, as in *Limosa lapponica*, the Bar-tailed Godwit

## Larosterna *lar-o-STIR-na*

*Larus*, gull, and Dutch, *sterna*, tern, as in *Larosterna inca*, the Inca Tern

## Larus *LA-rus*

Gull, as in *Larus pacificus*, the Pacific Gull

## Larvatus, -a *lar-VA-tus/ta*

*Lavare*, to bewitch, enchant, also masked, as in *Coracina larvata*, the Sunda Cuckooshrike, with a gray head/hood

## Lateralis *lat-er-AL-is*

*Latus*, side, flank, as in *Cisticola lateralis*, the Whistling Cisticola, which has rufous margins on its wing feathers that when folded show a rufous patch

## Laterallus *lat-er-AL-lus*

*Latus*, side, flank, and *rallus*, rail, as in *Laterallus xenopterus*, the Rufous-faced Crane, with white bars on its sides

## Lathamii *LAY-them-eye*

After John Latham, British physician and naturalist, as in *Peliperdix lathamii*, Latham's, or Forest, Francolin

## Lathamus *LAY-them-us*

After John Latham, British physician and naturalist, as in *Lathamus discolor*, the Swift Parrot

## Latirostris *lat-ih-ROSS-tris*

*Latus*, broad, and *rostris*, beak, as in *Contopus latirostris*, the Lesser Antillean Pewee

## Latistriata, -us *lat-ib-stree-AT-a/us*

*Latus*, broad, and *striatus*, furrow, streak, as in *Zosterornis latistriatus*, the Panay Striped Babbler, after Panay, Philippines

## Latrans *LAY-tranz*

*Latrare*, to bark, as in *Ducula latrans*, the Barking Imperial Pigeon

## Laudabilis *law-DA-bi-lis*

Praiseworthy, as in *Icterus laudabilis*, the Saint Lucia Oriole

## Lawesii *lawz-ee-eye*

After William Lawes, British New Guinea missionary, as in *Parotia lawesii*, Lawes's Parotia

## Lawrencei, -ii *LAW-ren-sye/law-RENS-ee-eye*

After George Lawrence, American businessman and amateur ornithologist, as in *Spinus lawrencei*, Lawrence's Goldfinch

## Layardi *lay-AR-dye*

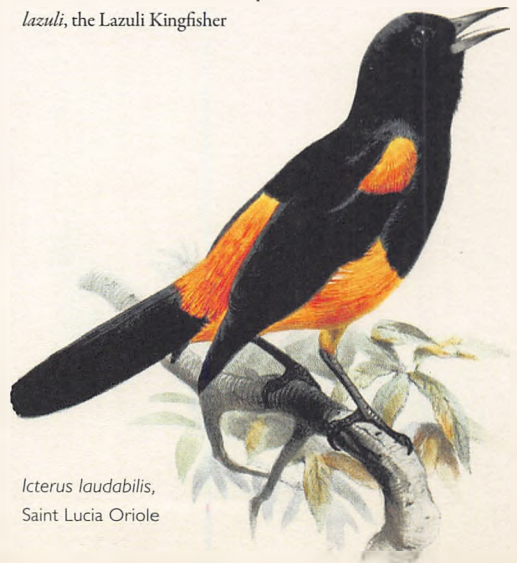
After Edgar Layard, Italian collector and later curator, as in *Sylvia layardi*, Layard's Warbler

## Laysanensis *lay-sa-NEN-sis*

After the Laysan Islands, as in *Anas laysanensis*, the Laysan Duck or Laysan Teal

## Lazuli *la-ZOO-lye*

*Lazul*, azure, blue, as in *Todiramphus lazuli*, the Lazuli Kingfisher



*Icterus laudabilis*,  
Saint Lucia Oriole



*Toxostoma lecontei*,  
Le Conte's Thrasher

### Leachii *LEACH-ee-eye*

After William Leach, a British zoologist, as in *Dacelo leachii*, the Blue-winged Kookaburra

### Leadbeateri *led-BEET-ter-eye*

After Benjamin Leadbeater, a British taxidermist and ornithologist, as in *Lophochroa leadbeateri*, Major Mitchell's, or Leadbeater's, Cockatoo

### Lecontei, -ii *le-CONT-eye/ee-eye*

After John LeConte, American entomologist, as in *Toxostoma lecontei*, Le Conte's Thrasher

### Legatus *le-GAT-us*

Ambassador, envoy, as in *Legatus leucophaius*, the Piratic Flycatcher

### Leiothrix *lay-EYE-o-thriks*

Greek, *leios*, smooth, and *thrix*, hair, as in *Leiothrix lutea*, the Red-billed Leiothrix or Pekin Nightingale; refers to the bird's smooth feathers

### Leipoa *lay-eye-PO-a*

Greek, *leipo*, leave, and *oon*, egg, as in *Leipoa ocellata*, the Mallecfowl, which constructs a compost pile to incubate its eggs

### Lentiginosus *len-ti-ji-NO-sus*

*Lentigo*, freckled, as in *Botaurus lentiginosus*, the American Bittern; a reference to the bird's patterned plumage

### Lepida *le-PEE-da*

*Lepidus*, neat, elegant, as in *Rhipidura lepida*, the Palau Fantail, an elegant bird

### Lepidocolaptes *le-pi-doe-ko-LAP-teez*

*Lepidus*, neat, elegant, and *colaptes*, a chisel or chiseler, as in *Lepidocolaptes affinis*, the Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, an elegantly-plumaged woodcreeper

### Lepidopyga *le-pi-doe-PI-ga*

*Lepidus*, neat, and *pyga*, rump, as in *Lepidopyga lilliae*, the Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird

### Lepidothrix *le-pib-DOE-thrix*

*Lepidus*, scaly, and *thrix*, hair, as in *Lepidothrix coronata*, the Blue-crowned Manakin, an elegantly plumaged Mannikin

### Leptasthenura *lep-tas-then-OO-ra*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, *asthenia*, weak, and *oura*, tail, as in *Leptasthenura andicola*, the Andean Tit Spinetail

### Leptocoma *lep-toe-KO-ma*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *kome*, hair, as in *Leptocoma minima*, the Crimson-backed Sunbird; the back, shoulders, and chest feathers appear as fine hairs

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

*Lepidothrix coronata*, the Blue-crowned Manakin, describes a bird with a crown of scaly hair. The male's crown is composed of iridescent blue feathers that resemble scales and a dark blue body. The much drabber female is a blend-into-the-environment dull green. Differences in male and female coloration is called "sexual dichromatism" and occurs primarily because the male wants to attract females and the female wants to be inconspicuous while attending to the nest. The name Manakin comes from the Dutch *mannekijn*, meaning little person, although it is unclear whether it is the size of the bird or its behavior that remind one of a little man. Manakins belong to the family Pipridae, consisting of 60 species, and are distinguished from similar family groups by the shape of their syrinx (voicebox).

**Leptodon** *lep-TOE-don*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *odon*, tooth, as in *Leptodon forbesi*, the White-collared Kite, with a sharply down-curved bill tip

**Leptopoecile** *lep-toe-poy-SIL-ee*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *poecil*-, variegated, many-colored, as in *Leptopoecile elegans*, the Crested Tit-warbler

**Leptopogon** *lep-toe-PO-gon*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *pogon*, beard, as in *Leptopogon rufipectus*, the Rufous-breasted Flycatcher; slender beard probably refers to the rictal bristles

**Leptosittaca** *lep-to-SIT-a-ka*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *psittaca*, parrot, as in *Leptosittaca branickii*, the Golden-plumed Parakeet

**Leptopterus** *lep-TOP-ter-us*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *pteron*, feathers or wing, as in *Leptopterus chabert*, the Chabert Vanga; its narrow wings are almost swallow-like

**Leptoptilos**, -a *lep-top-TIL-os/a*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *ptilon*, wing, as in *Leptoptilos crumenifer*, the Marabou Stork

*Enicognathus leptorhynchus*,  
Slender-billed Parakeet

**Leptorhynchus** *lep-toe-RINK-us*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *rhynchos*, bill, as in *Enicognathus leptorhynchus*, the Slender-billed Parakeet

**Leptosomus** *lep-tow-SO-mus*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *soma*, body, as in *Leptosomus discolor*, the Cuckoo Roller; its large head may make the body appear slender

**Lepturus** *lep-TOOR-us*

Greek, *leptos*, slender, fine, and *oura*, tail, as in *Phaethon lepturus*, the White-tailed Tropicbird

**Lesbia** *LEZ-bee-a*

Lesbia was the literary pseudonym of the great love of Roman poet Gaius Valerius Catullus, as in *Lesbia victoriae*, the Black-tailed Trainbearer

**Lessonia**, -i, -ii *les-SON-ee-a/eye/ee-eye*

After René Lesson, French ornithologist, as in *Lessonia oreas*, the Andean Nigrito

**Leucocephala**, -o, -us *loy-ko-se-FAL-a/o/us*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and Latin, *cephala*, the head, as in *Columba* (now *Patagioenas*) *leucocephala*, the White-crowned Pigeon

**Leucochloris** *loy-ko-KLOR-is*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *chloris*, greenness, freshness, as in *Leucochloris albicollis*, the White-throated Hummingbird

**Leucogaster**, -ra *loy-ko-GAS-ter/ra*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *gaster*, abdomen, as in *Sula leucogaster*, the Brown Booby

**Leucogenys** *loy-ko-JEN-is*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and Latin, *gena*, cheek, as in *Conirostrum leucogenys*, the White-eared Conebill

**Leucolaema**, -us *loy-ko-LEE-ma/mus*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *laemus*, throat, as in *Geokichla leucolaema*, the Enganno Thrush, after the island of Enganno, Indonesia

**Leucolophus** *loy-ko-LO-fus*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *lophus*, crest, tuft, as in *Tauraco leucolophus*, the White-crested Turaco

**Leucomelas**, -a *loy-ko-MEL-as/a*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *melas*, black, dark, as in *Tricholaema leucomelas*, the Acacia Pied Barbet





*Columba leuconota*,  
Snow Pigeon

### Leuconota, -us *loy-ko-NO-ta/tus*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *notos*, back, as in *Columba leuconota*, the Snow Pigeon

### Leucopeza *loy-ko-PEH-za*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *peza*, foot, edge, as in *Leucopeza semperi*, the possibly extinct Semper's Warbler

### Leucophrys *loy-KO-fris*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *ophrys*, brow, eyebrow, as in *Zonotrichia leucophrys*, the White-crowned Sparrow

### Leucophthalma, -us *loy-kof-THAL-ma/mus*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *ophthalma*, eye, as in *Psittacara leucophthalmus*, the White-eyed Parakeet

### Leucopleura, -us *loy-ko-PLUR-a/us*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *pleura*, side, as in *Thesclorichla leucopleura*, the Swamp Palm Bulbul

### Leucopogon *loy-ko-PO-gon*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *pogon*, beard, as in *Cantorchilus leucopogon*, the Stripe-throated Wren

### Leucopsar *loy-KOP-sar*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *psar*, a starling, as in *Leucopsar rothschildi*, the Bali Myna

### Leucopsis *loy-KOP-sis*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *opsis*, appearance, as in *Branta leucopsis*, the Barnacle Goose, so called because they were once thought to hatch from barnacles

### Leucoptera, -us *loy-KOP-ter-a/us*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *ptera*, wing, as in *Loxia leucoptera*, the Two-barred Crossbill

### Leucopternis *loy-kop-TER-nis*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *pternis*, hawk, as in *Leucopternis melanops*, the Black-faced Hawk

### Leucopyga, -alis

*loy-ko-PIJ-a/loy-ko-pij-AL-is*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *puge*, rump, as in *Lalage leucopyga*, the Long-tailed Triller

### Leucorhoa *loy-ko-RO-a*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *orrhos*, rump, as in *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*, Leach's Storm Petrel

### Leucorodia *loy-kor-OH-dee-a*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *rodo*, a rose, as in *Platalea leucorodia*, the Eurasian Spoonbill, which is almost all white, but takes on a rose wash if its food source contains plankton with red pigments



*Loxia leucoptera*,  
Two-barred Crossbill

**Leucosarcia** *loy-ko-SAR-see-a*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *sarcia*, a pack, bundle, or *sarc-*, flesh, as in *Leucosarcia melanoleuca*, the Wonga Pigeon, probably so named because people considered the bird a food source

**Leucosticte** *loy-ko-STICK-tee*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *stictos*, varied, varicolored, as in *Leucosticte brandti*, Brandt's Mountain Finch

**Leucotis** *loy-KO-tis*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *otos*, ear, as in *Basilinna leucotis*, the White-eared Hummingbird

**Leucurus** *loy-KOO-rus*

Greek, *leuko*, white, and *oura*, tail, as in *Elanus leucurus*, the White-tailed Kite

**Levaillant** *le-va-LAN-tye*

After Francois Le Vaillant, French collector and naturalist, as in *Clamator levaillanti*, Levaillant's Cuckoo

**Lewinii**, -ia *loo-WIN-ee-eye/ee-a*

After John Lewin, English naturalist, as in *Meliphaga lewinii*, Lewin's Honeyeater

**Lewis** *LOO-wis*

After Meriwether Lewis, American explorer, as in *Melanerpes lewis*, Lewis's Woodpecker

**Lichenostomis** *lye-ken-o-STOME-is*

Greek, *leichen*, to lick, and *stoma*, mouth, as in *Lichenostomis* (now *Caligavis*) *chrysops*, the Yellow-faced Honeyeater

**Lichmera** *lik-MER-a*

Greek, *lichmeres*, flicking the tongue, as in *Lichmera limbata*, the Indonesian Honeyeater

**Lichtensteinii** *lik-ten-STINE-ee-eye*

After Martin Lichtenstein, German physician and ornithologist, as in *Pterocles lichtensteinii*, Lichtenstein's Sandgrouse

**Limicola** *li-mi-KO-la*

*Limus*, mud, and *cola*, dwell, as in *Rallus limicola*, the Virginia Rail

**Limnocorax** *lim-no-COR-aks*

Greek, *limne*, pond, marsh, lake, and *korax*, crow, raven, as in *Limnocorax* (now *Amaurornis*) *flavirostra*, the Black Crake

**Limnortites** *lim-nok-TITE-eez*

Greek, *limne*, pond, marsh, lake, and *ktites*, dweller, as in *Limnortites rectirostris*, the Straight-billed Reedhaunter

**Limnodromus** *lim-no-DRO-mus*

Greek, *limne*, pond, marsh, lake, and *dromeus*, runner, as in *Limnodromus griseus*, the Short-billed Dowitcher

**Limnornis** *lim-NOR-nis*

Greek, *limne*, pond, marsh, lake, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Limnornis curvirostris*, the Curve-billed Reedhaunter

**Limnophylis** *lim-no-THLIP-is*

Greek, *limne*, pond, marsh, lake, and *thylpis*, small bird, as in *Limnophylis swainsonii*, Swainson's Warbler

**Limosa** *li-MO-sa*

*Limus*, mud, and *osus*, full of, prone, as in *Limosa limosa*, the Black-tailed Godwit, the common name perhaps coming from Old English meaning good to eat

**Lineatus**, -a *lin-ee-AH-tus/a*

Striped or lined, as in *Buteo lineatus*, the Red-shouldered Hawk

*Buteo lineatus*,  
Red-shouldered Hawk







*Phalaropus lobatus*,  
Red-necked Phalarope

### Liocichla *lye-o-SIK-la*

Greek, *lio*, smooth, and *cichla*, a thrush, as in *Liocichla ripponi*, the Scarlet-faced Liocichla, with smooth plumage of the back and face

### Lioptilus *lye-op-TIL-us*

Greek, *lio*, smooth, soft, and *ptilion*, feather or wing, as in *Lioptilus nigricapillus*, the Bush Blackcap

### Liosceles *ly-os-SEL-eez*

Greek, *lio*, smooth, soft, and *scelos*, leg, as in *Liosceles thoracicus*, the Rusty-belted Tapaculo, with few scales on legs, making them appear smooth

### Littoralis *lit-to-RAL-is*

Shoreline, of the shore, as in *Ochthornis littoralis*, the Drab Water Tyrant, an inhabitant of river and streamside

### Livia *LIV-ee-a*

*Livens*, bluish, ashen, as in *Columba livia*, the Rock Dove

### Lloydi *LOY-dye*

After William Lloyd, Irish-American collector, as in *Psaltiriparus lloydii* (now *minimus*), the American Bushtit

### Lobatus *lo-BA-tus*

Lobed toes, as in *Phalaropus lobatus*, the Red-necked Phalarope

### Loboparadisea *lo-bo-par-a-DEES-ee-a*

Greek, *lobos*, lobe, and *paradisea*, pleasure ground, as in *Loboparadisea sericea*, the Yellow-breasted Satinbird, with nasal lobes on its bill; once thought to be a Bird of Paradise

### Lochmias *lock-MEE-as*

Greek, *lokhmaios*, inhabitant of the bush, as in *Lochmias nematura*, the Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper

### Locustella *low-kus-TEL-la*

*Locusta*, locust, and *-ellus*, small, as in *Locustella fluviatilis*, the River Warbler, possibly named for its locust-like song

### Loddigesia *lod-di-JEE-see-a*

After George Loddiges, British botanist and influential nurseryman, as in *Loddigesia mirabilis*, the Marvelous Spatuletail

### Lomvia *LOM-vee-a*

Swedish for guillemot, murre, or diver, as in *Uria lomvia*, the Thick-billed Murre or Brunnich's Guillemot

### Lonchura *lon-KOO-ra*

Greek, *lonkhe*, spearhead, and *oura*, tail, as in *Lonchura cucullata*, the Bronze Mannikin

### Longicauda, -ta, -tus

*lon-jee-KAW-da/lon-jee-kaw-DAT-a/us*

*Longus*, long, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Bartramia longicauda*, the Upland Sandpiper

### Longipennis *lon-ji-PEN-nis*

*Longus*, long, and *penna*, feather, as in *Falco longipennis*, the Australian Hobby, with long wings

### Longirostris *lon-ji-ROSS-tris*

*Longus*, long, and *rostris*, beak, as in *Rallus longirostris*, the Clapper Rail

### Lophaetus *lo-FEE-tus*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *aetos*, eagle, as in *Lophaetus occipitalis*, the Long-crested Eagle



*Rallus longirostris*,  
Clapper Rail



**Lophodytes** *lo-fo-DYE-teez*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *dytes*, diver, as in *Lophodytes cucullatus*, the Hooded Merganser

**Lophoictinia** *lo-fo-ik-TIN-ee-a*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *iktinos*, a kite, as in *Lophoictinia isura*, the Square-tailed Kite

**Lopholaimus** *lo-fo-LAY-mus*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *laimus*, throat, as in *Lopholaimus antarcticus*, the Topknot Pigeon

**Lophonetta** *lo-fo-NET-ta*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *netta*, duck, as in *Lophonetta specularioides*, the Crested Duck

**Lophophorus** *lo-fo-FOR-us*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *phorus*, bearer, as in *Lophophorus lhuysii*, the Chinese Monal

**Lophortyx** *lo-FOR-ticks*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *ortyx*, quail as in *Lophortyx* (now *Callipepla*) *californica*, the California Quail

**Lophotrix** *lo-FO-stricks*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *strix*, owl, as in *Lophotrix cristata*, the Crested Owl

**Lophotis**, -tes *lo-FO-tis/teez*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *otis*, bustard, as in *Lophotis ruficrista*, the Red-crested Bustard / Korhaan

**Lophozosterops** *lo-fo-ZOS-ter-ops*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, *zoster*, a girdle, and *ops*, the eye, as in *Lophozosterops dohertyi*, the Crested White-eye

**Lophura** *lo-FOOR-a*

Greek, *lophus*, crest, and *oura*, tail, as in *Lophura swinhoii*, Swinhoe's Pheasant

**Lorentzi** *lo-RENTS-eye*

After Hendrik Lorentz, Dutch diplomat, as in *Pachycephala lorentzi*, Lorentz's Whistler

**Loriculus** *lor-ib-KOO-lus*

Malay, *lori*, parrot, and *culus*, small, as in *Loriculus galgulus*, the Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot; Hanging Parrots can sleep hanging upside down

**Lorius** *LOR-ee-us*

Malay, *lori*, parrot, as in *Lorius domicella*, the Purple-naped Lory

**Loxia** *LOCK-see-a*

Greek, *loxos*, crosswise, as in *Loxia scotica*, the Scottish Crossbill, the only vertebrate unique to the United Kingdom, with curved, overlapping mandibles to extract seeds from cones

**Loxops** *LOCKS-ops*

Greek, *loxos*, crosswise, and *ops*, the eye, as in *Loxops coccineus*, the Akepa; this refers to the slight crossing of the tips of the lower and upper jaws

## LATIN IN ACTION

From the Middle French *bistarde*, meaning slow bird, we get bustard, as in the Red-crested Bustard, *Lophotis ruficrista*, also called the Korhaan. It is unique among bustards in having a retractile pink crest. Found from Eurasia to Australia, the 20 or so species of bustards are most common in Africa. They are large birds at 16 to 60 inches (40 to 150 centimeters) in length, with the Kori and Great Bustards often considered the world's heaviest flying birds, weighing up to 44 pounds (20 kilograms), although they rarely fly, sometimes going months without leaving the ground. They are adapted for a terrestrial lifestyle as they lack a hind toe and cannot perch on branches. All bustards are omnivorous and opportunistic and will feed on almost anything edible.



*Lophotis ruficrista*,  
Red-crested Bustard

**Luciae** *LOO-see-ee*

After Lucy Baird, daughter of Spencer Baird, as in *Leiothlypis luciae*, Lucy's Warbler

**Lucidus** *loo-SID-us*

*Luci-*, light, clear, shining, as in *Hemignathus lucidus*, the Nukupuu

**Lucifer** *LOO-si-fer*

Light bringing, as in *Calothorax lucifer*, the Lucifer Sheartail; probably refers to the bird's bright, iridescent violet throat

**Ludlowi** *LUD-lo-eye*

After Frank Ludlow, British educator, botanist, and ornithologist, as in *Fulvetta ludlowi*, the Brown-throated Fulvetta

**Ludoviciana, -us** *loo-doe-vee-see-AN-a/us*

Of Louisiana, as in *Piranga ludoviciana*, the Western Tanager

**Lugubris** *loo-GOO-bris*

Mourning, mournful, as in *Quiscalus lugubris*, the Carib Grackle; perhaps because the glossy black color reminds one of mourning

**Lullula** *lul-LOO-la*

From the bird's call, as in *Lullula arborea*, the Woodlark

**Lunata, -us** *loo-NA-ta/tus*

*Lunatus*, crescent-shaped, as in *Onychoprion lunatus*, the Spectacled Tern, probably alluding to its wing shape

**Lunda** *LOON-da*

Norwegian word for Puffin, as in *Lunda* (now *Fratercula*) *cirrhat*a, the Tufted Puffin; Lunde-hunds are dogs bred especially to hunt puffins in their burrows

**Luscinia** *loo-SIN-ee-a*

*Lusini*us, a nightingale, as in *Luscinia calliope*, the Siberian Rubythroat

**Lutea, -us** *LOO-tee-a/us*

*Luteus*, yellow, as in *Leiothrix lutea*, the Red-billed Leiothrix or Pekin Nightingale, with yellow on the throat and breast

**Luteifrons** *LOO-tee-eye-fronz*

*Luteus*, yellow, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Nigrita luteifrons*, the Pale-fronted Nigrita

**Luteiventris** *loo-te-eye-VEN-tris*

*Luteus*, yellow, and *ventris*, underside, as in *Myiodynastes luteiventris*, the Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher



*Piranga ludoviciana*,  
Western Tanager

**Lutosa** *loo-TOW-sa*

*Lutum*, mud, as in *Caracara lutosa*, the extinct Guadalupe Caracara; possibly due to its predominantly dark brown plumage

**Lybius** *LIH-bee-us*

Probably a misspelling of Libya, as in *Lybius undatus*, the Banded Barbet

**Lycocorax** *ly-ko-KOR-aks*

Greek, *lyco*, wolf, and *corax*, raven, as in *Lycocorax pyrrhopterus*, the Paradise-crow

**Lymnocryptes** *lim-no-CRIP-teez*

Greek, *limne*, marsh, pond, and *kruptos*, hidden, as in *Lymnocryptes minimus*, the Jack Snipe, a bird rarely seen unless flushed

**\* Lyrurus** *lye-ROO-rus*

Greek, *lura*, a lyre, and *oura*, tail, as in *Lyrurus tetrix*, the Black Grouse

# LOUIS AGASSIZ FUERTES

(1874–1927)

Louis Agassiz Fuertes was one of the most talented illustrators of birds in history. His detailed drawings and paintings continue to provide a storehouse of knowledge about bird species.

Born in Ithaca, New York, in 1874, Fuertes was named after Louis Agassiz, a renowned nineteenth-century Swiss naturalist. From early in his life Fuertes showed an extraordinary interest in birds. Although his father wanted his son, the youngest of six, to go into an established field, he realized how fascinated Louis was with birds when the eight year old captured an owl and tied it to the kitchen table. When Mr. Fuertes took his son to the Ithaca Public Library to show him Audubon's *Birds of America*, the boy found his vocation and began to draw birds in earnest.

Seeing how single-minded Louis became about killing and drawing birds, and afraid the boy would never be able to make a living as an artist, Fuertes's parents tried to shift his course by taking him to a preparatory school in Switzerland in 1892. The next year Fuertes unwillingly enrolled at Cornell as an architecture major.

He failed almost all of his classes except drawing.

While still in college, he had an opportunity to show his bird illustrations to Elliott Coues, then one of the country's top ornithologists and a founding member of the American Ornithologists' Union. Coues was very impressed and convinced him that he could support himself as an artist. Taking the twenty year old under his wing, Coues introduced Louis to the field of ornithology, displayed his artwork at an American Ornithologists' Union meeting, and encouraged him to obtain commissions for his drawings.

Fuertes did more than 100 drawings for Mabel Osgood Wright and Eliot Coues's *Citizen Bird: Scenes from Bird-Life in Plain English for Beginners*, between 1896 and 1897. In 1899, Edward Harriman, a wealthy railroad magnate, arranged a scientific exploration of the coast of Alaska and brought with him several respected scientists such as C. Hart Merriam, John Muir, Robert Ridgway, and others. He included two photographers and three artists, including Fuertes. Fuertes often killed and skinned birds to study them closely, but when he could not, he made quick sketches and described their songs in his notes.

When Fuentes's detailed, full-color drawings from the Alaska expedition were published, he became well known and in demand for his works. Some of the works he illustrated include *Handbook of Birds of Western North America*



*Neophron percnopterus*,  
Egyptian Vulture

Fuertes' illustration of an Egyptian Vulture. Although vultures feed mainly on carrion, only New World vultures can detect their potential meal by smell.



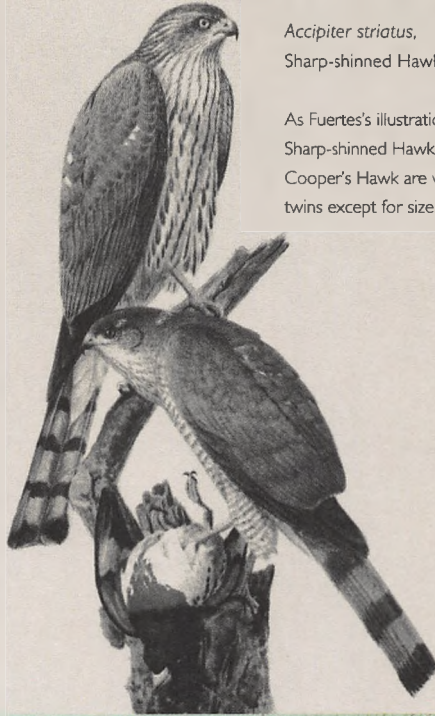
by Frank Chapman, 1902; *Upland Game Birds* by Edwin Sandys and T. S. van Dyke, 1902; *Key to North American Birds* by Elliot Coues, 1903; and *Birds of New York* by Elon Howard Eaton, 1910.

Although Fuertes graduated with a degree in architecture, he became a lecturer in ornithology at Cornell, but took a leave of absence from his lecturing position to accompany Dr. Wilfred Osgood of Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). He produced some of his finest sketches, rendering lifelike images of birds from brief glimpses. His phenomenal memory enabled him to reproduce an individual bird in complete detail even years after being in the field.

Fuertes died in a car accident with a train in 1927, shortly after returning from Abyssinia. In his lifetime he had prepared 3,500 bird skins and drawn over 1,000 studio and field sketches of over 400 species of birds from all over the world.

Fuertes is considered to have produced the most realistic bird illustrations of his time and they are still in demand. A recent auction of his Wild Turkey sold for over \$86,000 in 2012.

Whistling Ducks are not true ducks but in a separate subfamily. On the right is the Fulvous Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna bicolor*. It is unclear what species Fuertes intended the other two whistling ducks to be.



*Accipiter striatus*,  
Sharp-shinned Hawk

As Fuertes's illustration shows, the Sharp-shinned Hawk and the larger Cooper's Hawk are virtually identical twins except for size.



"If the birds of the world had met to select a human being who could best express to mankind the beauty and charm of their forms... they would unquestionably have chosen Louis Fuertes."

*Dr. Chapman speaking at Fuertes' funeral, quoted in American National Biography*

## M

**Macgillivrayi** *mak-GIL-li-vray-eye*

After John MacGillivray, Australian naturalist, and son of William MacGillivray, Scottish artist and professor. The Fiji Petrel, *Pseudobulweria macgillivrayi*, is named after the son and MacGillivray's Warbler, *Geothlypis tolmiei*, after the father

**Machetornis** *mak-eh-TOR-nis*

Greek, *makhetes*, fighter, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Machetornis rixosa*, the Cattle Tyrant

**Mackinlayi** *mak-KIN-lee-eye*

After Archibald Mackinlay, as in *Macropygia mackinlayi*, Macinlay's Cuckoo-Dove

**Macrocephalon** *mak-ro-se-FAL-on*

Greek, *macro*, long or large, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Macrocephalon maleo*, the Maleo

**Macrodictyla** *mak-ro-dak-TIL-a*

Greek, *macro*, long or large, and *dactylos*, finger, toe, as in *Oceanodroma macrodictyla*, the probably extinct Guadalupe Storm Petrel, whose middle toe and claw are twice as long as its nearest relative's



*Zenaida macroura*,  
Mourning Dove

**Macrodipteryx** *mak-ro-DIP-ter-s-iks*

Greek, *macro*, long or large, *di-*, two, and *pteryx*, wing, as in *Macrodipteryx longipennis*, the Standard-winged Nightjar

**Macronectes** *mak-ro-NEK-teez*

Greek, *macro*, long or large, and *nektes*, a swimmer, as in *Macronectes giganteus*, the Southern Giant Petrel

**Macronyx** *mak-RON-iks*

Greek, *macro*, long or large, and *onux*, claw, as in *Macronyx ameliae*, the Rosy-breasted, or Rosy-throated Longclaw

**Macrorhynchus** *mak-ro-RINK-us*

Greek, *macro*, long or large, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Saxicola macrorhynchus*, the White-browed Bush Chat

**Macroura**, -us *mak-ROO-ra/rus*

Greek, *macro*, long or large, and *oura*, tail, as in *Zenaida macroura*, the Mourning Dove, named for its plaintive call; also as in *Vidua macroura*, the Pin-tailed Whydah

**Macularia**, -us *mak-oo-LAR-ee-a/us*

*Macula*, spot, as in *Actitis macularius*, the Spotted Sandpiper

**Maculata**, -um, -us *mak-oo-LAT-a/um/us*

*Macula*, spot, as in *Stachyris maculata*, the Chestnut-rumped Babbler, with a heavily spotted chest and belly

**Maculicauda**, -us *mak-oo-li-KAW-da/dus*

*Macula*, spot, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Hypocnemoides maculicauda*, the Band-tailed Antbird, with spots on its tail

**Maculicoronatus** *mak-oo-li-cor-o-NAT-us*

*Macula*, spot, and *corona*, crown, as in *Capito maculicoronatus*, the Spot-crowned Barbet

**Maculifrons** *mak-OO-li-fronz*

*Macula*, spot, and *frons*, forehead, brow, as in *Veniliornis maculifrons*, the Yellow-eared Woodpecker, with spots on its forehead

**Maculipectus** *mak-oo-li-PEK-tus*

*Macula*, spot, and *pectus*, breast, as in *Pheugopedius maculipectus*, the Spot-breasted Wren

**Maculipennis** *mak-oo-li-PEN-nis*

*Macula*, spot, and *penna*, feather, as in *Chroicocephalus maculipennis*, the Brown-hooded Gull



**Maculirostris** *mak-oo-li-ROSS-tris*

*Macula*, spot, and *rostris*, bill, as in *Muscisaxicola maculirostris*, the Spot-billed Ground Tyrant

**Maculosa**, -us *mak-oo-LO-sa/sus*

Spotted, as in *Nothura maculosa*, the Spotted Nothura

**Madagascariensis**, -inus

*mad-a-gas-kar-ee-EN-sus/EYE-nus*

After Madagascar, as in *Caprimulgus madagascariensis*, the Madagascan Nightjar

**Magellanica**, -us *ma-jel-LAN-ih-ka/kus*

Straits of Magellan, as in *Spinus magellanica*, the Hooded Siskin

**Magna**, -num *MAG-na/num*

Large, as in *Sturnella magna*, the Eastern Meadowlark; may refer to either the bird's range or its size compared with starlings

**Magnificens**, -cus *mag-NIF-ih-senz/kus*

Splendid, grand, as in *Fregata magnificens*, the Magnificent Frigatebird

**Magnirostris**, -tre, -tra

*mag-ni-ROSS-tris/tree/tra*

*Magna*, large, and *rostris*, beak, as in *Gerygone magnirostris*, the Large-billed Gerygone

**Magnolia** *mag-NO-lee-a*

Latinized name of Pierre Magnol, French physician and botanist, as in *Setophaga magnolia*, the Magnolia Warbler

**Major** *MAY-jor*

*Major*, large, great, as in *Locustella major*, the Long-billed Bush Warbler

**Malabaricus**, -ka *mal-a-BAR-ih-kus/ka*

After Malabar, a region of India, as in *Copsychus malabaricus*, the White-rumped Shama

**Malacca**, -ensis *mal-AK-ka/mal-a-KEN-sis*

After Malacca, Malaysia, as in *Lonchura malacca*, the Tricolored Munia

**Malacocincla** *mal-a-ko-SINK-la*

Greek, *malakos*, soft, and *cincla*, thrush, as in *Malacocincla cinereiceps*, the Ashy-headed Babbler; resembles a thrush and has soft-appearing plumage



*Setophaga magnolia*,  
Magnolia Warbler

**Malaconotus** *mal-a-kon-O-tus*

Greek, *malakos*, soft, and *noton*, back, south end, as in *Malaconotus cruentus*, the Fiery-breasted Bushshrike, with soft-appearing feathers on its back

**Malacopteron** *mal-a-KOP-ter-on*

Greek, *malakos*, soft, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Malacopteron albugulare*, the Gray-breasted Babbler

**Malacoptila** *mal-a-cop-TIL-a*

Greek, *malakos*, soft, and *ptila*, feather, as in *Malacoptila panamensis*, the White-whiskered Puffbird

**Malacorhynchus** *mal-a-ko-RINK-us*

Greek, *malakos*, soft, Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*, the Pink-eared Duck; the large spoon-shaped bill appears soft and pliable

**Maleo** *MAL-ee-o*

From the native Indonesian name, as in *Macrocephalon maleo*, the Maleo



**Malherbi** *mal-ERB-ee-ya*

After Alfred Malherbe, French magistrate and naturalist, as in *Cyanoramphus malherbi*, Malherbe's Parakeet

**Malurus** *mal-OO-rus*

Greek, *malos*, soft, and *oura*, tail, as in *Malurus cyaneus*, the Superb Fairywren

**Manacus** *man-AH-kus*

Latin, from the Dutch *manneken*, a dwarf, little man, as in *Manacus manacus*, the White-bearded Manakin

**Manucodia** *man-oo-KO-dee-a*

Javanese, *manuk dewata*, bird of the gods, as in *Manucodia comrii*, the Curl-crested Manucode

**Mareca** *mar-EK-a*

From the Portuguese for a kind of duck, as in *Mareca* (now *Anas penelope*), the Eurasian Wigeon

**Margaritae** *mar-gar-EE-tee*

After Margaret Holt, the wife of American ornithologist E. G. Holt, as in *Batis margaritae*, Margaret's Batis

**Margaroperdix** *mar-gar-o-PER-diks*

Greek, *margarodes*, pearly, and *perdix*, partridge, as in *Margaroperdix madagarensis*, the Madagascan Partridge

**Margarops** *MAR-ga-rops*

Greek, *margarites*, pearl, and *opsis*, appearance, look, as in *Margarops fuscatus*, the Pearly-eyed Thrasher

**Margarornis** *mar-gar-OR-nis*

Greek, *margarodes*, pearly, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Margarornis squamiger*, the Pearled Treerunner

**Marginata**, -us *mar-jin-AT-a/us*

*Marginatus*, rimmed, as in *Charadrius marginatus*, the White-fronted Plover

**Marila** *mar-IL-a*

Greek, *marile*, charcoal, as in *Aythya marila*, the Greater Scaup, with overall dark coloration

**Marina** *mar-EE-na*

Marine, of the sea, as in *Pelagodroma marina*, the White-faced Storm Petrel

**Marinus** *mar-EE-nus*

Marine, of the sea, as in *Larus marinus*, the Great Black-backed Gull

**Maritima**, -mus *mar-ib-TEE-ma/mus*

Marine, of the sea, as in *Ammodramus maritimus*, the Seaside Sparrow

**Markhami** *MARK-am-eye*

After Albert Markham, English explorer and navy admiral, as in *Oceanodroma markhami*, the Markham's Storm Petrel

**Marmoratus** *mar-mo-RA-tus*

Marbled, of marble, as in *Brachyramphus marmoratus*, the Marbled Murrelet

**Martinica**, -us *mar-tin-EE-ka/kus*

After Martinique, a Caribbean island, as in *Porphyrio martinicus*, the (American) Purple Gallinule, gallinule derived from the Latin *gallina*, meaning little hen

**Mauri** *MAW-rye*

After Ernesto Mauri, Italian botanist, as in *Calidris mauri*, the Western Sandpiper

**Maximiliani** *maks-i-mil-ee-AN-eye*

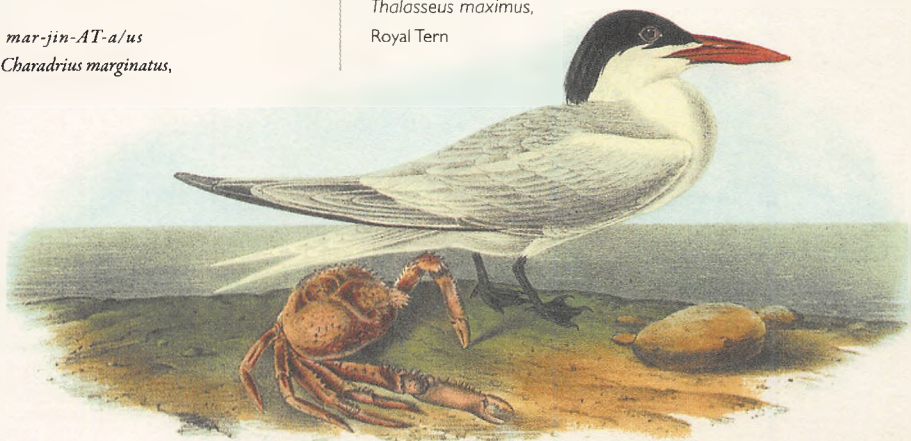
After Prince Philipp Maximilian, German aristocrat and explorer, as in *Pionus maximiliani*, the Scaly-headed Parrot

**Maximus**, -a *MAKS-ee-mus/ma*

Largest, greatest, as in *Thalasseus maximus*, the Royal Tern

*Thalasseus maximus*,

Royal Tern



**Mayri** *MARE-eye*

After Ernst Mayr, German ornithologist and evolutionary biologist, as in *Ptiloprora mayri*, Mayr's Honeyeater

**Mayrornis** *mare-OR-nis*

After Ernst Mayr, German evolutionary biologist and ornithologist, and Greek *ornis*, bird, as in *Mayrornis versicolor*, the Versicolored Monarch

**Mccownii** *mak-KOWN-ee-eye*

After John McCown, American Army officer and naturalist, as in *Rhynchophanes mccownii*, McCown's Longspur

**Meeki** *MEEK-eye*

After Albert Meek, English explorer, as in *Ninox meeki*, the Manus Boobook or Hawk-Owl

**Megaceryle** *me-ga-sir-IL-ee*

Greek, *mega*, great, large, and *ceryle*, a kingfisher, as in *Megaceryle alcyon*, the Belted Kingfisher

**Megadyptes** *me-ga-DIP-teez*

Greek, *mega*, great, large, and *dyptes*, diver, as in *Megadyptes antipodes*, the Yellow-eyed Penguin

**Megalaima** *me-ga-LAY-ma*

Greek, *mega*, great, large, and *laima*, throat, as in *Megalaima chrysopogon*, the Golden-whiskered Barbet (see box)

**Megalopterus** *me-ga-LOP-ter-us*

Greek, *mega*, great, large, and *ptery*, winged, as in *Phalcoboenus megalopterus*, the Mountain Caracara

**Megapodius** *me-ga-POD-ee-us*

Greek, *mega*, great, large, and *pous*, foot, as in *Megapodius laperouse*, the Micronesian Megapode

**Megarynchus**, -a, -os *me-ga-RINK-us/a/os*

Greek, *mega*, great, large, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Megarynchus pitangua*, the Boat-billed Flycatcher

**Megascops** *MEG-a-skops*

Greek, *mega*, great, large, and *scops*, owl, as in *Megascops nudipes*, the Puerto Rican Screech Owl

**Melaenornis** *mel-ee-NOR-nis*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Melaenornis pammelaina*, the Southern Black Flycatcher

## LATIN IN ACTION

The faces of barbets have stiff bristles that extend forward and cover the nares, the base of the jaw, and the neck region, thus resembling a beard; hence the name barbet from the Latin *barbatus*, bearded. The Golden-whiskered Barbet, along with 25 other species, belongs to the family of Asian barbets, the Megalaimidae, which reflects their characteristic large throats. Megalaimidae have zygodactylous feet and are brightly colored green with red, blue, and yellow markings. *Megalaima chrysopogon* describes the Golden-whiskered Barbet as large-throated with a gold (*chryso*) beard (Greek, *pogon*).



*Megalaima chrysopogon*,  
Golden-whiskered Barbet

**Melancholicus** *mel-an-KOL-ih-kus*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *chol-e*, bile, as in *Tyrannus melancholicus*, the Tropical Kingbird, an aggressive rather than melancholic bird

**Melanerpes** *mel-an-ER-pees*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *herpes*, creeper, as in *Melanerpes formicivorus*, the Acorn Woodpecker

**Melanitta** *mel-an-NIT-ta*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *netta*, duck, as in *Melanitta fusca*, the Velvet Scoter

**Melanocephala**, -us *mel-an-o-se-FAL-a/us*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Arenaria melanocephala*, the Black Turnstone

**Melanoceps** *mel-AN-o-seps*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and Latin *ceps*, headed, as in *Myrmeciza melanoceps*, the White-shouldered Antbird

**Melanochlamys** *mel-an-o-KLAM-is*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *chlamy*, cloak, as in *Accipiter melanochlamys*, the Black-manded Goshawk

**Melanochlora** *mel-an-o-KLOR-a*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *chlora*, green, as in *Melanochlora sultanea*, the Sultan Tit, with a glossy blackish-green back, neck, and throat

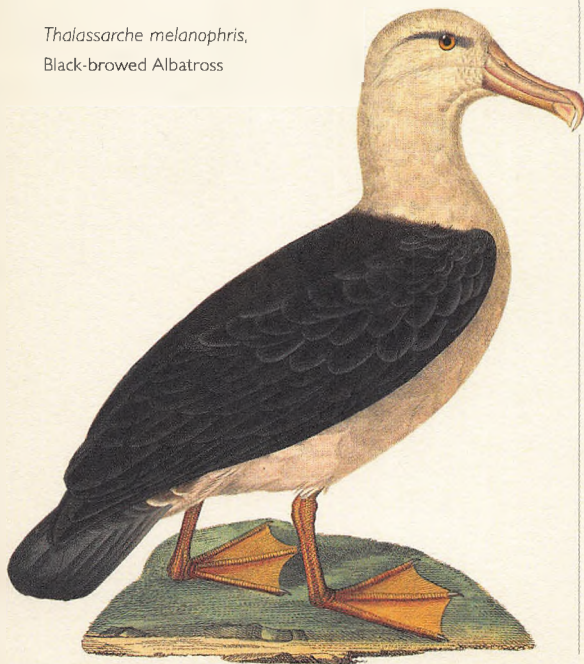
**Melanocorypha** *mel-an-o-kor-IF-a*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *koryphe*, head, as in *Melanocorypha mongolica*, the Mongolian Lark

**Melanocorys** *mel-an-o-KOR-is*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *koros*, lark, as in *Calamospiza melanocorys*, the Lark Bunting

*Thalassarche melanophris*,  
Black-browed Albatross



**Melanogaster** *mel-an-o-GAS-ter*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *gastro*-, stomach, as in *Ploceus melanogaster*, the Black-billed Weaver

**Melanogenys** *mel-an-o-JEN-is*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *genys*, cheek, as in *Adelomyia melanogenys*, the Speckled Hummingbird

**Melanoleuca**, -os, -us *mel-an-o-LOY-kak/os/kus*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *leukos*, white, as in *Tringa melanoleuca*, the Greater Yellowlegs

**Melanolophus** *mel-an-o-LO-fus*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *lophus*, crest, as in *Gorsachius melanolophus*, the Malayan Night Heron

**Melanonota**, -us *mel-an-o-NO-ta/us*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *nota*, mark, as in *Pipraeidea melanonota*, the Fawn-breasted Tanager

**Melanophris** *mel-an-O-friss*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *ophris*, eyebrow, as in *Thalassarche melanophris*, the Black-browed Albatross

**Melanops** *MEL-an-ops*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *ops*, eye, as in *Centropus melanops*, the Black-faced Coucal

**Melanoptera**, -us *mel-an-OP-ter-a/us*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Coracina melanoptera*, the Black-headed Cuckooshrike

**Melanospiza** *mel-an-o-SPY-za*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Melanospiza richardsoni*, the St. Lucia Black Finch

**Melanotis** *mel-an-O-tis*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *otus*, ear, as in *Pteruthius melanotis*, the Black-eared Shrike-babbler

**Melanotos** *mel-an-O-tos*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *noton*, the back, as in *Calidris melanotos*, the Pectoral Sandpiper

**Melanura**, -us *mel-an-OO-ra/us*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *oura*, tail, as in *Poliopitila melanura*, the Black-tailed Gnatcatcher



# MELANERPES

From the Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *herpes*, creeper, the genus *Melanerpes* (*mel-an-ER-pee-z*) is the largest of the 30 genera of woodpeckers with 22 species out of a total of 200. The only places woodpeckers are not found are Australia, New Zealand, Madagascar, and the polar regions. They are all very recognizable with their stiff tails, zygodactyl feet (two toes forward, two back), and their habit of climbing trees vertically and pecking at the bark.

The specific names of the *Melanerpes* genus tend to be nicely descriptive. There is *M. aurifrons*, the Golden-fronted Woodpecker; *M. formicivorus*, the ant-eating Acorn Woodpecker; and *M. erythrocephalus*, the Red-headed Woodpecker. There are also several eponyms like *M. hoffmannii*, *M. lewis*, and *M. pucherani*.

The most fascinating aspect of all woodpeckers is how they peck at bark and drill holes in trees or



*Melanerpes aurifrons*,  
Golden-fronted Woodpecker

fences. Woodpeckers hammer their beaks into trees 18 to 22 times per second, at speeds of 13 to 15 miles per hour (21 to 25 kilometers per hour), thousands of times per day, subjecting their brains to deceleration forces of 1.2 kilograms with each strike. So what is it about the woodpecker skull that protects them?

The beak is hard but elastic; the lower bill bends slightly with each impact. The skull is constructed of a large number of thin bones that criss-cross each other, making the head spongy and able to deform a little. A special bone called the hyoid supports the tongue and wraps around the back of the skull to the nasal openings. Covered with muscles, the hyoid bone's looping structure around the whole skull acts like a safety belt.

The musculature of the tongue allows it to be extended the length of the head or more. The tongue is made sticky by secretions from salivary glands and the tip of the tongue, furnished with barbs or spines, can be manipulated to capture insects or larvae.

Besides displaying these amazing adaptations, woodpeckers serve a very important function in the environment by providing holes for other birds to nest in. Bluebirds, tits, nuthatches, wrens, and others rely on woodpecker-provided cavities.

*Melanerpes herminieri*,  
Guadeloupe Woodpecker

The Guadeloupe Woodpecker is endemic to the island of Guadeloupe. In spite of habitat degradation, its population is stable.



# MELEAGRIS

This genus consists of two species: the Wild Turkey of discontinuous distribution across the United States and the Ocellated Turkey, found only in the Yucatan region of Central America. *Meleagris* (*mel-ee-AH-gris*) comes from the Latin meaning guinea fowl; the Wild Turkey specific name is *gallopavo* (Latin *gallo*, cock, and *pavo*, peacock), and that of the Ocellated Turkey is *ocellata*. No one knows where the word turkey came from, but it might have been Columbus who called it tuka or tukki.

We also don't know if pilgrims and Indians ate Thanksgiving turkey in seventeenth-century North America, because apparently the pilgrims called all wildfowl turkey. The Spaniards brought the Wild Turkey home from North America and it gradually became popular all over Europe, being variously called turkey-fowl, turkey bird, turkey cock, and even Indian Fowl because it was thought to come from the West Indies. When the



*Meleagris gallopavo*,  
Wild Turkey

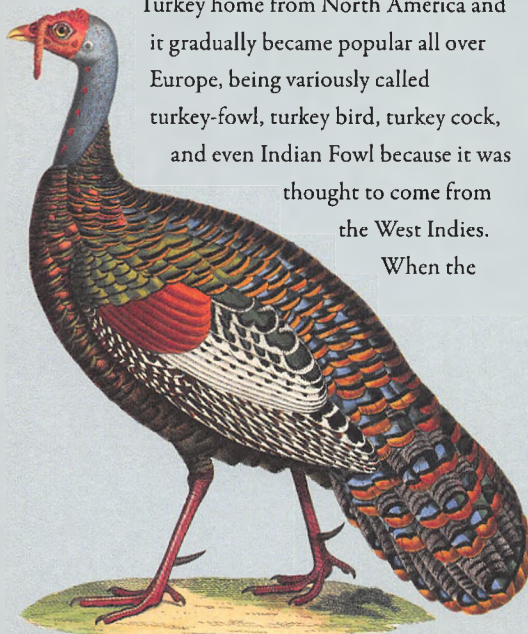
colonists were introduced to the bird by Native Americans, they were surprised to see a bird they were familiar with since it had been raised in England for many generations by this time.

As American pioneers moved westward and cleared the forests, the habitat for

turkeys diminished. By the mid-1800s the turkey was gone from almost half of its original range, and by the early 1900s only around 30,000 turkeys remained in the wild. After the turn of the century the decline of the turkey population halted as protective measures and reintroductions brought the population up to about 4.5 million across all states except Alaska.

Turkeys are now bred to have a higher protein level and bigger breast muscles than wild birds, and are raised in open pens or environmentally controlled barns. The population of the US eats nearly 300 million turkeys each year, and around 50 million of those are consumed at Thanksgiving. That is about 8 kilograms per year per person. In the EU, about 3.5 kilograms are eaten per person each year. Australians and South Africans eat a mere kilogram of turkey each year, mainly around Christmas.

Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national symbol of the US. The Bald Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, won, but the turkey graces tables nicely.



*Meleagris ocellata*,  
Ocellated Turkey



**Meleagris** *mel-ee-AH-gris*

Greek, guineafowl; early dictionaries interchanged words for turkey, guineafowl, and peafowl, as in *Meleagris gallopavo*, the Wild Turkey, and *Numida meleagris*, the Helmeted Guineafowl

**Melichneutes** *mel-ik-NOY-teez*

Greek, *meli*, honey, and *ikhnos*, a track, footprint, as in *Melichneutes robustus*, the Lyre-tailed Honeyguide

**Melidectes** *mel-ee-DEK-teez*

Greek, *meli*, honey, and *dektes*, a beggar, as in *Melidectes leucostephes*, the Vogelkop Melidectes of the honeyeater family

**Melierax** *mel-ee-AIR-aks*

Greek, *melos*, song, and *hierax*, hawk or falcon, as in *Melierax canorus*, the Pale Chanting Goshawk

**Melilestes** *mel-ee-LES-teez*

Greek, *meli*, honey, and *lestes*, a thief, as in *Melilestes mearhynchus*, the Long-billed Honeyeater

**Meliphaga** *mel-ee-FA-ga*

Greek, *meli*, honey, and *phagein*, eat, as in *Meliphaga gracilis*, the Graceful Honeyeater

**Melithreptus** *mel-ee-THREP-tus*

Greek, *meli*, honey, and *threptos*, feed, nourish, as in *Melithreptus albugularis*, the White-throated Honeyeater

**Mellisuga** *mel-li-SOO-ga*

*Mel*, honey, and *sugo*, suck, as in *Mellisuga helenae*, the Bee Hummingbird

**Melodia** *mel-O-dee-a*

Greek, *melodos*, melodious, as in *Melospiza melodia*, the Song Sparrow

**Melodus** *mel-O-dus*

Greek, *melodos*, melodious, as in *Charadrius melodus*, the Piping Plover

**Melophus** *mel-O-fus*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *lophus*, crest, as in *Melophus* (now *Emberiza*) *lathamii*, the Crested Bunting

**Melopsittacus** *mel-op-SIT-ta-kus*

Greek, *melos*, song, and Latin, *psittacus*, parrot, as in *Melopsittacus undulatus*, the Budgerigar or Common Parakeet

**Melopyrrha** *mel-o-PEER-a*

Greek, *melas*, black, dark, and *pyrrha*, red, flame-colored, as in *Melopyrrha nigra*, the Cuban Bullfinch

**Melospiza** *mel-o-SPY-za*

Greek, *melos*, song, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Melospiza lincolnii*, Lincoln's Sparrow

**Membranaceus** *mem-bra-NAY-see-us*

*Membrana*, membranous, as in *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*, the Pink-eared Duck; the scientific name describes the pliable spoon-shaped bill with membranes for filter feeding

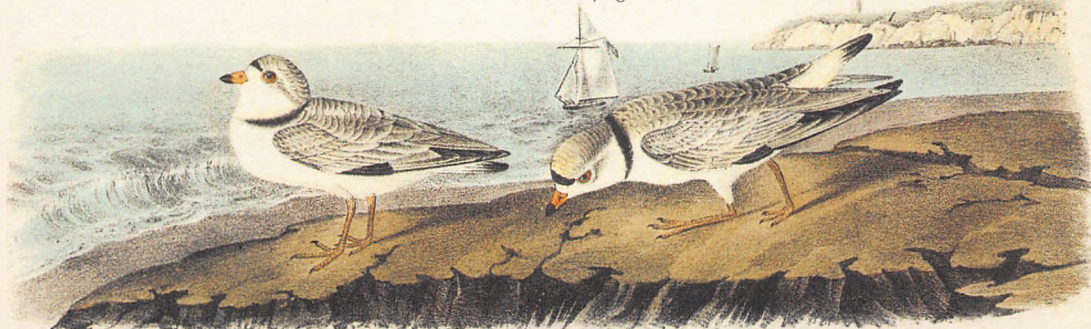
**Menckei** *MENK-ee-eye*

After Bruno Mencke, German zoologist, as in *Symphysichrus menckei*, the Mussau Monarch, of Mussau Island, New Guinea

**Mentalis** *men-TAL-is*

Of the chin, as in *Cracticus mentalis*, the Black-backed Butcherbird. This bird has a white chin set off from its mostly black head and neck

*Charadrius melodus*,  
Piping Plover





## Menura *men-OO-ra*

Greek, *mene*, moon, and *oura*, tail, as in *Menura alberti*, Albert's Lyrebird, with crescent moon-like markings (lunules) on the inner web of the outer tail feathers

## Merganetta *mer-gan-ET-ta*

*Mer*gus, diver, and *netta*, duck, as in *Merganetta armata*, the Torrent Duck

## Merganser *mer-GAN-zer*

*Mer*ger, to dive, and *anser*, goose, as in *Mergus merganser*, the Common Merganser

## Meropogon *mer-a-PO-gon*

Greek, *merops*, a bee-eater, and *pogon*, beard, as in *Meropogon forsteri*, the Purple-bearded or Celebes Bee-eater

## Merops *MER-ops*

Greek, *merops*, a bee-eater, as in *Merops apiaster*, the European Bee-eater

## Merrilli *MER-ril-eye*

After Elmer Merrill, American botanist, as in *Ptilinopus merrilli*, the Cream-breasted Fruit Dove

## Mexicana, -us, -um *mecks-ih-KAN-a/us/um*

After Mexico, as in *Sialia mexicana*, the Western Bluebird

## Meyeri, -ianus *MY-er-eye/my-er-ee-AN-nus*

After Adolf Meyer, German anthropologist and ornithologist, as in *Epimachus meyeri*, the Brown Sicklebill

## Micrastur *my-KRAS-ter*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and Latin, *astur*, hawk, as in *Micrastur ruficollis*, the Barred Forest Falcon

## Microcochlearius *my-kro-ko-klee-AR-ee-us*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and Latin, *cochlear*, spoon, as in *Microcochlearius* (now *Hemitriccus*) *josephinae*, the Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant

## Microhierax *my-kro-HY-er-aks*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and *hierax*, a hawk or falcon, as in *Microhierax melanoleucos*, the Pied Falconet

## Micromegas *my-kro-MAY-gas*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and *mega*, large, as in *Nesotites micromegas*, the Antillean Piculet, which is twice as large as any of the other piculets (a subfamily of small woodpeckers)

## Micromonacha *my-kro-mo-NAK-a*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and *monakhos*, a monk, as in *Micromonacha lanceolata*, the Lanceolated Monklet; to someone this bird with a lance-shaped bill resembled a monk

## Micropalama *my-kro-pa-LAM-a*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and *palama*, palm, as in *Micropalama* (now *Calidris*) *himantopus*, the Stilt Sandpiper, referring to the small amount of webbing between the toes

## Micropsitta *my-krop-SIT-ta*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and Latin *psittacus*, parrot, as in *Micropsitta geelvinkiana*, the Geelvink Pygmy Parrot

## Microptera, -us *my-KROP-ter-a/us*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Miraфра microptera*, the Burmese Bush Lark

## Microhynchus, -um *my-kro-RINK-us/um*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Bradornis microhynchus*, the African Gray Flycatcher

## Microsoma *my-kro-SO-ma*

Greek, *micro*s, small, and *soma*, body, as in *Oceanodroma microsoma*, the Least Storm Petrel



*Sialia mexicana*,  
Western Bluebird

**Migratorius** *my-gra-TOR-ee-us*

*Migrare*, to move, as in *Turdus migratorius*, the American Robin, migratory in parts of its range

**Militaris** *mil-ih-TAR-is*

*Militar-*, soldier, as in *Ara militaris*, the Military Macaw

**Milvago** *mil-VA-go*

*Milvus*, bird of prey, and *-ago*, resembling, as in *Milvago chimango*, the Chimango Caracara

**Milvus** *MIL-vus*

*Milvus*, bird of prey, as in *Milvus migrans*, the Black Kite

**Mimus** *MIM-us*

Mimic, imitator, as in *Mimus polyglottos*, the Northern Mockingbird, which copies the songs of other bird species

**Mindanensis** *min-da-NEN-sis*

After Mindanao, Philippines, as in *Coracina mindanensis*, the Black-bibbed Cicadabird

**Minimus**, -um, -a *MIN-ih-mus/mum/ma*

Least, or smallest, as in *Psaltirparus minimus*, the American Bushtit

**Mino** *MY-no*

*Mino*, from the Hindi, *maina*, mynah, as in *Mino* (now *Ampeliceps coronatus*), the Golden-crested Myna

**Minor** *MY-nor*

Inferior in grade, age, as in *Chordeiles minor*, the Common Nighthawk. It is a medium-sized nighthawk, but probably seemed small at the time it was named (when smaller species were unknown)

**Minutilla** *myn-oo-TIL-la*

*Minutus*, little, as in *Calidris minutilla*, the Least Sandpiper

**Minutus**, -a *my-NOO-tus/a*

Very small, as in *Hydrocoloeus minutus*, the Little Gull

**Mirabilis** *mir-AH-bi-lis*

Wonderful, as in *Eriocnemis mirabilis*, the Colorful Puffleg

**Mirafr** *mir-AF-ra*

*Miras*, wonderful, and *afra*, African, as in *Mirafr africana*, the Rufous-naped Lark (see box)

**Mississippiensis** *mis-si-sip-pee-EN-sis*

After Mississippi, as in *Ictinia mississippiensis*, the Mississippi Kite

## LATIN IN ACTION

From the Old English *laferce*, meaning songbird, comes the word lark. The melodious songs of many larks gave rise to the saying "happy as a lark" and the rather carefree attitude of "going off on a lark." Almost all larks are found in the Old World and parts of Australia, and only one, the Horned or Shore Lark, *Eremophila alpestris*, is found in North America. (The so-called meadowlarks are actually classified as blackbirds.) The Rufous-naped Lark's genus *Mirafr* (from *mira*, wonderful) probably refers to its call. Larks are ground dwellers (with an extended rear toe), but to advertise their territories and attract mates, they have developed complex "flight songs" that they often deliver in mid-air.



*Mirafr africana*,  
Rufous-naped Lark

**Mniotilta** *nee-o-TIL-ta*

Greek, *mniōn*, moss, and *tiltos*, plucked, as in *Mniotilta varia*, the Black-and-white Warbler, which uses moss and other items to construct its nest

**Modesta**, -tus *mo-DES-ta/tus*

*Modestus*, restrained, mild, modest, as in *Progne modesta*, the Galapagos Martin, with plain, unadorned plumage

**Mollissima** *mol-LISS-sim-a*

*Mollis*, soft, as in *Somateria mollissima*, the Common Eider, a bird whose down is collected from its nests to be used for pillows and such



*Monarcha godeffroyi*,  
Yap Monarch

## Molluccensis *mol-luk-SEN-sis*

After the Moluccas (Maluku Islands), as in *Pitta moluccensis*, the Blue-winged Pitta

## Molothrus *mol-O-thrus*

Greek, *molobrus*, beggar or parasite, as in *Molothrus ater*, the Brown-headed Cowbird, which is a nest parasite

## Momotus *mo-MO-tus*

Derives from the bird's call, motmot, as in *Momotus momota*, the Amazonian Motmot

## Monachus *mo-NAK-us*

Monk, as in *Myiopsitta monachus*, the Monk Parakeet; the hood-like markings on the head are said to resemble a monk's hood

## Monarcha *mo-NAR-ka*

Greek, *monarkhos*, monarch, king, as in *Monarcha godeffroyi*, the Yap Monarch

## Monasa *mo-NAS-a*

Greek, *monases*, alone, as in *Monasa flavirostris*, the Yellow-billed Nunbird, a sedentary bird. They live in small, territorial groups and keep to themselves

## Mongolica *mon-GO-lik-a*

After Mongolia, as in *Melanocorypha mongolica*, the Mongolian Lark

## Monias *mo-NYE-as*

Greek, *monases*, alone, as in *Monias benschi*, the Subdesert Mesite; the scientific name a misnomer, as it is found in groups

## Monocerata *mon-o-ser-AH-ta*

Greek, *monos*, single, one, and *keras*, horn, as in *Cerorhinca monocerata*, the Rhinoceros Auklet

## Montana, -us *mon-TAN-a/us*

Relating to mountains, as in *Charadrius montanus*, the Mountain Plover

## Montani *mon-TAN-eye*

After Joseph Montano, French anthropologist, as in *Anthracoceros montani*, the Sulu Hornbill

## Montezumae *mon-te-ZOOM-ee*

Latinized form of the name of the Aztec emperor of Mexico, as in *Cyrtonyx montezumae*, the Montezuma Quail

## Monticola *mon-ti-KO-la*

*Montis*, mountain, and *colo*, inhabit, as in *Monticola brevipes*, the Short-toed Rock Thrush

## Montifringilla *mon-ti-frin-JIL-la*

*Montis*, mountain, and *fringilla*, finch, as in *Fringilla montifringilla*, the Brambling

## Morinellus *mor-ib-NEL-lus*

Greek, *moros*, foolish, stupid, and *ella*, diminutive, as in *Charadrius morinellus*, the Eurasian Dotterel, a bird easily approached

## Morus *MOR-us*

Greek, *moros*, foolish, stupid, as in *Morus bassanus*, the Northern Gannet, possibly named for its spectacular feeding dives

## Motacilla *mo-ta-SIL-la*

*Motus*, move, and *cilla*, inaccurately used to mean tail, as in *Motacilla alba*, the White Wagtail, which frequently wags its tail

## Muelleri *MEW-ler-eye*

After Salomon Müller, a Dutch naturalist, as in *Lewinia muelleri*, the Auckland Rail

## Multistriata, -us *mul-ti-stree-AT-a/us*

*Multi*, many, and *striata*, a streak, furrow, as in *Charmosyna multistriata*, the Striated Lorikeet

## Muscicapa *mus-si-KAP-a*

*Musca*, fly, and *capio*, capture, as in *Muscicapa* (now *Cyanoptila*) *cyanomelana*, the Blue and White Flycatcher



**Muscisaxicola** *mus-si-saks-ih-KO-la*

*Musca*, fly, *saxum*, stone, and *colo*, inhabit, as in *Muscisaxicola maculirostris*, the Spot-billed Ground Tyrant, a flycatcher that nests on the ground

**Muscivora** *mus-si-VOR-a*

*Musca*, fly, and *vorus*, devour, swallow, as in *Muscivora* (now *Tyrannus*) *forficatus*, the Scissor-tailed Flycatcher

**Musophaga** *moo-so-FAY-ga*

*Musa*, banana, and *phagus*, eater of, as in *Musophaga rossae*, Ross's Turaco

**Mustelina** *mus-tel-EE-a*

Resembling a weasel, as in *Hylocichla mustelina*, the Wood Thrush, whose color may be deemed weasel-like

**Muta** *MOO-ta*

Mute, quiet, as in *Lagopus muta*, the Rock Ptarmigan, which has only a croaking song

**Myadestes** *my-a-DEST-eez*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and *edestes*, eater, as in *Myadestes townsendi*, Townsend's Solitaire

**Mycteria** *mik-TER-ee-a*

Greek, *mukter*, nose, snout, as in *Mycteria ibis*, the Yellow-billed Stork

**Myiagra** *my-AG-ra*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and *agra*, catching, seizure, as in *Myiagra atra*, the Black Flycatcher

**Myiarchus** *my-ee-ARK-us*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and *archos*, ruler, as in *Myiarchus crinitus*, the Great Crested Flycatcher

**Myioborus** *my-ee-o-BOR-us*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and *borus*, eating, as in *Myioborus ornatus*, the Golden-fronted Whitestart

**Myiodynastes** *my-ee-o-dye-NAST-eez*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and *dynastes*, ruler, chief, as in *Myiodynastes luteiventris*, the Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher

**Myioparus** *my-ee-o-PAR-us*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and Latin, *parus*, a titmouse, as in *Myioparus plumbeus*, the Gray Tit-Flycatcher

**Myiopsitta** *my-ee-op-SIT-ta*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and Latin, *psittacus*, parrot, as in *Myiopsitta monachus*, the Monk Parakeet; not serious insect eaters, the genus name seems not to fit

**Myiornis** *my-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Myiornis ecaudatus*, the Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant, the smallest passerine (songbird) in the world

**Myiozetetes** *my-ee-o-ze-TET-eez*

Greek, *muia*, fly, gnat, and *zetetes*, a seeker, hunter, as in *Myiozetetes granadensis*, the Gray-capped Flycatcher

**Myrmeciza** *mer-meh-size-a*

Greek, *myrmec*, ant, and *izo*, ambush, as in *Myrmeciza goeldii*, Goeldi's Antbird

**Myrmecocichla** *mer-meh-ko-SICK-la*

Greek, *myrmec*, ant, and *cichla*, thrush-like bird, as in *Myrmecocichla nigra*, the Sooty Chat

**Myrmornis** *mir-MOR-mis*

Greek, *myrmec*, ant, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Myrmornis torquata*, the Wing-banded Antbird

**Myrmotherula** *mir-mo-ther-OO-la*

Greek, *myrmec*, ant, and *theras*, hunter, as in *Myrmotherula axillaris*, the White-flanked Antwren

**Mystacalis** *miss-ta-KAL-is*

Mustache, as in *Diglossa mystacalis*, the Moustached Flowerpiercer

**Mystacea** *miss-TACE-ee-a*

Greek, *mystac*, upper lip, mustache, as in *Sylvia mystacea*, Menetries's Warbler, after Édouard Ménétries, French zoologist

**Myzomela** *my-zo-MEL-a*

Greek, *muzo*, to suck, and *meli*, honey, as in *Myzomela erythrocephala*, the Red-headed Myzomela

**Myzornis** *my-ZOR-nis*

Greek, *muzo*, to suck, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Myzornis pyrrhura*, the Fire-tailed Myzornis; its diet includes nectar and tree sap

# Bird Songs and Calls

In temperate zones, breeding season for most birds is in the spring; only in the tropics is it all year. At your bird feeder, in shrubs, or in the sky you can hear birds making sounds throughout the year, but oral communication between birds is much more obvious and frequent during courtship and nesting. Songs are complex sounds typically used during breeding season to attract mates and defend territories. Calls are simple sounds usually meant to convey information such as the location of a bird, to keep a flock together, or to sound an alarm; for example, the sounds flocks of migrating geese make or the chattering around the bird feeder. Songs are produced only by birds classified as songbirds (order Passeriformes)—just over 50 percent of all the birds in the world—but not all birds of the order produce songs, such as jays and crows, for example. “Songbirds” is a common term, but those birds in the order Passeriformes are related due to their anatomic and physiologic similarities, such as the structure of the palate, the feet, and the wings, not on their singing abilities. Birds not in the Passeriformes order have

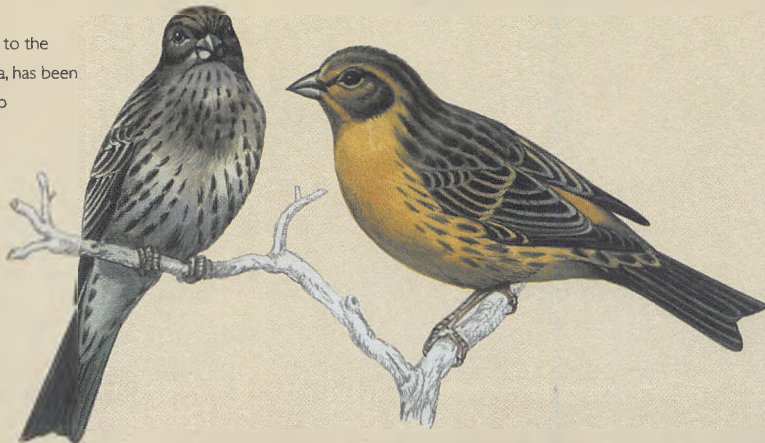
calls or other vocalizations, even melodic ones, but usually just honks, quacks, grunts, wheezes, or growls.

Humans have a larynx, a set of muscles and cartilage on top of the trachea that leads to the lungs, over which air flows to produce sounds. Birds have a similar structure, a syrinx, but it is located on the bottom of the trachea, closer to the lungs and airsacs for efficient sound production. There are lots of sound-related modifications in the bird world. Swans have a long trachea that curls into the sternum, allowing the production of low frequency sounds. Oilbirds and swiftlets produce sounds similar to sonar for navigation, effective in the dark places they often inhabit. Some birds, like bushshrikes and babblers, engage in antiphonal singing: one bird of a pair sings, then the other, sounding like one bird singing.

It takes a bit of practice to identify birds by their songs or calls and it's best to learn from someone who knows them. There are recordings available on CDs and the internet to help you learn these songs, but be aware that birds, like humans, have regional accents. Different populations of songbirds have songs that differ, sometimes considerably. Sparrows from the east of North America may sound different than those in the west. So it's really best to learn songs from birds in your area.

*Serinus canaria*,  
Atlantic Canary

The Atlantic Canary, native to the Canary Islands and Madeira, has been domesticated and bred into a variety of colors.



Some naturalists might disagree, but birds do not sing purely for enjoyment. Singing serves reproductive activities necessary for the survival of the species, for passing genes to the next generation. But it is also dangerous; singing attracts attention, and thus competitors and predators. Typically, only males sing and are attractively colored. Females rarely sing and are usually dull colored. Singing occurs usually in the breeding season. If singing were actually an expression of joy, both males and females would do it, and all year around. It may be nice to think the robin warbling his melodious song is expressing his happiness, but survival, not emotion, is the driver.

Bird song is partly genetic and partly learned. Experiments have shown that young birds, isolated from their parents, sing a song, but it's incomplete and only partially true to their species. And if they hear other songs, they incorporate parts of them. Young birds have to learn the full song by listening to their parents in the spring or summer following the year they are hatched.

Years ago, singing canaries were popular. A radio show in the US in the 1940s featured dozens of canaries singing along with classical records. There was a canary song training record you could use at home to teach your canary to sing. Their popularity led unscrupulous pet shop owners to inject both male and female canaries with testosterone, the male hormone that induces singing (and other courtship behavior). Needless to say, the new owners were disappointed when, after a few weeks, the canaries stopped singing as the hormone wore off.

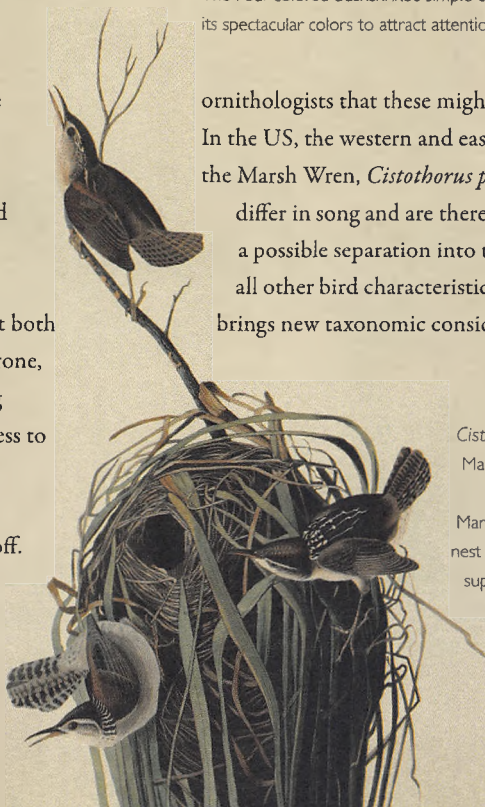
For many years songs have been used as a way to identify species. Variations in the calls of similar-looking birds also provide hints to



*Telophorus quadricolor*,  
Four-colored Bushshrike

The Four-colored Bushshrike's simple call augments its spectacular colors to attract attention.

ornithologists that these might be different species. In the US, the western and eastern populations of the Marsh Wren, *Cistothorus palustris*, for example, differ in song and are therefore being studied for a possible separation into two species. As with all other bird characteristics, new information brings new taxonomic considerations.



*Cistothorus palustris*,  
Marsh Wren

Marsh Wrens build a domed nest with a side entrance and support it with emergent marsh plants.



# N

## Naevius, -a, -oides

*NEE-vee-us/a/nee-vee-OID-eez*

*Naevus*, spot or spotted, as in *Ixoreus naevius*, the Varied Thrush

## Naevosa *nee-VO-sa*

*Naevus*, spot or spotted, as in *Stictonetta naevosa*, the Freckled Duck

## Nahani *na-HAN-eye*

After P. F. Nahan, a Belgian traveler, as in *Ptilopachus nahani*, Nahan's Partridge

## Nana, -nus *NA-na/nus*

*Nanus*, dwarf, as in *Acanthiza nana*, the Yellow Thornbill, with a bill not unlike a sharp thorn

## Napensis *na-PEN-sis*

Greek, *nape*, the woods, and *-ensis*, belonging to, as in *Megascops napensis*, the Napo Screech Owl

## Napothera *na-po-THER-a*

Greek, *nape*, the woods, and *therao*, hunt, as in *Napothera atrigularis*, the Black-throated Wren-Babbler

## Natalensis *na-ta-LEN-sis*

*Natal*, South Africa, specifically the Natal, and *-ensis*, belonging to, as in *Cisticola natalensis*, the Croaking Cisticola, a bird found in Africa south of the Sahara



*Strix nebulosa*,  
Great Gray Owl



*Nectarinia famosa*,  
Malachite Sunbird

## Natalis *na-TAL-is*

Birthday, as in *Ninox natalis*, the Christmas Boobook, endemic to Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean

## Nativitatis *na-tiv-ib-TAT-us*

*Nativitas*, birth, as in *Puffinus nativitatis*, the Christmas Shearwater, common name from Christmas Island in the Pacific (Kiribati)

## Nattererii *NAT-er-er-ee-eye*

After Johann Natterer, an Australian naturalist and collector, as in *Cotinga nattererii*, the Blue Cotinga

## Naumanni *NOY-man-eye*

After Johann Naumann, German farmer and naturalist, as in *Falco naumanni*, the Lesser Kestrel

## Nebouxii *ne-BOUKS-ee-eye*

After Adolphe Neboux, French physician and naturalist, as in *Sula neboxii*, the Blue-footed Booby

## Nebularia *neb-oo-LAR-ee-a*

*Nebula*, mist, cloudy, and *aria*, belonging to, as in *Tringa nebularia*, the Common Greenshank, with grayish-brown winter plumage

## Nebulosa *neb-oo-LOS-a*

*Nebula*, mist, cloudy, as in *Strix nebulosa*, the Great Gray Owl, an allusion to its grayish color

## Necropsar *ne-KROP-sar*

Greek, *necro*, dead, and *psar*, starling, as in *Necropsar rodericanus*, the extinct Rodrigues Starling

## Nectarinia *nek-tar-IN-ee-a*

Greek, *nectar*, and *inus*, belonging to, as in *Nectarinia famosa*, the Malachite Sunbird

## Neergaardi *NER-gard-eye*

After P. Neergaard, recruiter for Witwatersrand mines, as in *Cinnyris neergaardi*, Neergaard's Sunbird

## Neglecta, -us *ne-GLEK-ta-tus*

Neglected, as in *Sturnella neglecta*, the Western Meadowlark, which was for years thought to be the western population of the Eastern Meadowlark

## Nehrkori *NAIR-korn-eye*

After Adolphe Nehrkorn, German ornithologist and oologist, as in *Dicaeum nehrkorni*, the Crimson-crowned Flowerpecker

## Nelsoni *NEL-son-eye*

After Edward Nelson, founding president of the American Ornithologists' Union, as in *Vireo nelsoni*, the Dwarf Vireo

## Nemoricola *nem-or-ib-KO-la*

*Nemus*, a grove, and *colo*, dwell, as in *Gallinago nemoricola*, the Wood Snipe; Snipe from the Old Norse, *snipa*

## Nemosia *ne-MO-see-a*

*Nemus*, a grove, as in *Nemosia pileata*, the Hooded Tanager

## Neochelidon *nee-o-KEL-ih-don*

Greek, *neo*, new, and *chelidon*, swallow, as in *Neochelidon tibialis*, the White-thighed Swallow

## Neochen *NEE-o-ken*

Greek, *neo*, new, and *chen*, goose, as in *Neochen jubata*, the Orinoco Goose

## Neocichla *nee-o-SICK-La*

Greek, *neo*, new, and *cichla*, thrush, as in *Neocichla gutturalis*, the Babbling Starling

## Neodrepanis *nee-o-dre-PAN-is*

Greek, *neo*, new, and *drepane*, a sickle, as in *Neodrepanis coruscans*, the Common Sunbird-Asity, with a sickle-shaped bill

## Neomorphus *nee-o-MOR-fus*

Greek, *neo*, new, and *morphe*, form, as in *Neomorphus rufipennis*, the Rufous-winged Ground Cuckoo

## Neophema *nee-o-FEEM-a*

Greek, *neo*, new, and *Euphema*, a previous genus of birds no longer used, as in *Neophema elegans*, the Elegant Parrot

## Neopsittacus *nee-op-SIT-ta-kus*

Greek, *neo*, new, and Latin, *psittacus*, parrot, as in *Neopsittacus pullicauda*, the Orange-billed Lorikeet; probably reflects a newly discovered genus of parrots at the time of naming

## Neospiza *nee-o-SPY-za*

Greek, *neo*, new, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Neospiza* (now *Crithagra*) *concolor*, the São Tomé Grosbeak

## Neotis *nee-O-tis*

Greek, *neos*, new, and *otis*, bustard, as in *Neotis denhami*, Denham's Bustard

## Nereis *NER-ee-is*

A sea god, as in *Sternula nereis*, the Fairy Tern

## Nesasio *ne-SAS-ee-o*

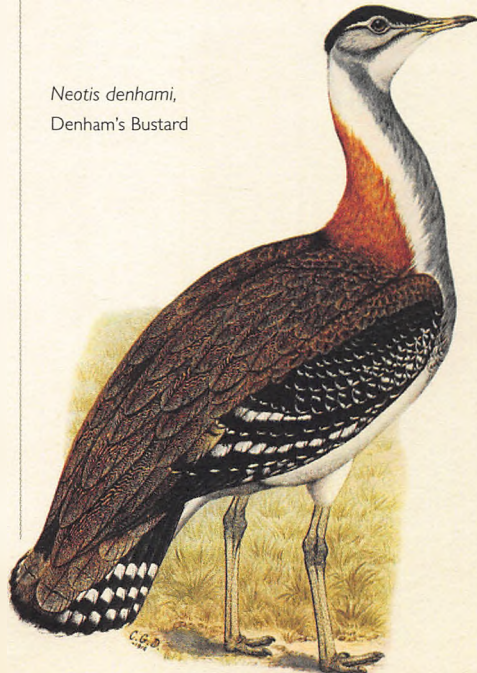
Greek, *nesos*, island, and *asio*, little horned owl, as in *Nesasio solomonensis*, the Fearful Owl

## Nesocichla *ne-so-SICK-La*

Greek, *nesos*, island, and Latin, *cichla*, thrush, as in *Nesocichla eremita*, the Tristan Thrush

## Nesoctites *ne-sock-TITE-eez*

Greek, *nesos*, island, and *ktites*, inhabitants, as in *Nesoctites micromegas*, the Antillean Piculet



*Neotis denhami*,  
Denham's Bustard

## Nesofregetta *ne-so-fre-GET-ta*

Greek, *nesos*, island, and *fregetta*, Latinized form of English frigate, as in *Nesofregetta fuliginosa*, the Polynesian Storm Petrel

## Nesomimus *ne-SOM-ib-nus*

Greek, *nesos*, island, and *minus*, mimic, as in *Nesomimus* (now *Mimus*) *trifasciatus*, the Floreana Mockingbird

## Nesospiza *ne-so-SPY-za*

Greek, *nesos*, island, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Nesospiza questi*, the Nightingale Island Finch

## Nesotriccus *ne-so-TRIK-kus*

Greek, *nesos*, island, and *trikkos*, a small bird, as in *Nesotriccus ridgwayi*, the Cocos Flycatcher

## Nestor *NES-tor*

Hero from greek mythology, as in *Nestor meridionalis*, the New Zealand Kaka (see box), a Maori name meaning parrot

## Netta *NET-ta*

Greek, *netta* or *nessa*, duck, as in *Netta erythrophthalma*, the Southern Pochard

*Nestor meridionalis*,  
New Zealand Kaka



## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

Both Kaka and Nestor are unusual names, but for different reasons. The New Zealand Kaka, *Nestor meridionalis*, was named by the Maori for its call and the genus name came from Greek mythology. Nestor was an Argonaut who assisted in the hunt for the centaurs and fought in the Trojan War at the age of 110. There appears to be no reason to assign the Kaka this name, but over the years, beginning with Linnaeus, names from classical mythology were occasionally chosen for birds. The specific epithet, *meridionalis*, simply means southern. The Kaka is a primitive parrot, having evolved from ancestors about five million years ago. Its brush-like tongue tip is one differentiating characteristic, allowing it to dine on nectar, as well as a variety of fruit.

## Nettapus *NET-ta-pus*

Greek, *netta* or *nessa*, duck, and *pous*, foot, as in *Nettapus pulchellus*, the Green Pygmy Goose

## Neumannii *NOY-man-nye*

After Oskar Neumann, a German ornithologist, as in *Urosphena neumannii*, Neumann's Warbler

## Neumayer *NOY-mare*

After Franz Neumayer, Austrian botanist, as in *Sitta neumayer*, the Western Rock Nuthatch

## Newelli *noo-WEL-lee-eye*

After Matthias Newell, Hawaiian missionary, as in *Puffinus newelli*, Newell's Shearwater

## Newtonia, -iana *noo-TONE-ee-a/noo-tone-ee-AN-a*

After Alfred Newton, British zoologist, as in *Newtonia amphicroa*, the Dark Newtonia

## Niger, -ra *NY-jer/gra*

Black, as in *Chlidonias niger*, the Black Tern

## Nigrescens *nee-GRESS-sens*

Blackish, from *niger*, black, as in *Setophaga nigrescens*, the Black-throated Gray Warbler



**Nigricans** *NEE-gri-kans*

*Nigrico*, becoming black, from *niger*, black, as in *Sayornis nigricans*, the Black Phoebe

**Nigricapillus, -ocapillus**

*nee-gri-ka-PIL-lus/nee-gro-ca-PIL-lus*

*Niger*, black, and *capillus*, hair on the head, as in *Formicarius nigricapillus*, the Black-headed Anthrush

**Nigricauda** *nee-gri-KAW-da*

*Niger*, black, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Myrmeciza nigricauda*, Esmeraldas Antbird

**Nigriceps** *NEE-gri-seps*

*Niger*, black, and *ceps*, headed, as in *Serinus nigriceps*, the Ethiopian Siskin

**Nigricollis** *nee-gri-KOL-lis*

*Niger*, black, and *collis*, neck, collar, as in *Grus nigricollis*, the Black-necked Crane

**Nigrifrons** *NEE-gri-fronz*

*Niger*, black, and *frons*, front, forehead, as in *Chlorophoneus nigrifrons*, the Black-fronted Bushshrike

**Nigripectus** *nee-gri-PEK-tus*

*Niger*, black, and *pectus*, breast, as in *Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*, the Black-breasted Boatbill

**Nigripennis** *nee-gri-PEN-nis*

*Niger*, black, and *penna*, feather, as in *Oriolus nigripennis*, the Black-winged Oriole

**Nigripes** *nee-GRIP-eez*

*Niger*, black, and *pes*, foot, as in *Phoebastria nigripes*, the Black-footed Albatross

**Nigrirostris** *nee-gri-ROSS-tris*

*Niger*, black, and *rostris*, bill or beak, as in *Andigena nigrirostris*, the Black-billed Mountain Toucan

**Nigrita** *nee-GRIT-a*

*Niger*, black, as in *Nigrita bicolor*, the Chestnut-breasted Nigrita

**Nigrogularis** *nee-gro-goo-LAR-is*

*Niger*, black, and *gularis*, throat, as in *Colinus nigrogularis*, the Yucatan Bobwhite



*Machaerirhynchus nigripectus*,  
Black-breasted Boatbill

**Nigropectus** *nee-gro-PEK-tus*

*Niger*, black, and *pectus*, breast, as in *Biatas nigropectus*, the White-bearded Antshrike

**Nigrorufa, -fus** *nee-gro-ROO-fa/fus*

*Niger*, black, *rufus*, red, as in *Ficedula nigrorufa*, the Black-and-orange Flycatcher

**Nigroventris** *nee-gro-VEN-tris*

*Niger*, black, *ventris*, belly, as in *Euplectes nigroventris*, the Zanzibar Red Bishop

**Nilotica, -us** *nee-LOT-ih-ka/us*

*Niloticus* refers to the Nile River where *Gelochelidon nilotica*, the Gull-billed Tern, was first described

**Ninox** *NY-noks*

Derivation unknown, as in *Ninox jacquiniti*, Solomons Boobook or the Hawk-Owl

**Nipalensis** *ni-pa-LEN-sis*

After Nepal, as in *Nisaetus nipalensis*, the Mountain Hawk-Eagle

**Nitens** *NI-tenz*

*Nitere*, to shine, as in *Phainopepla nitens*, the Phainopepla, a silky-plumaged bird

**Nitidus** *ni-TY-dus*

Elegant, trim, gleaming, as in *Buteo nitidus*, the Gray-lined Hawk



*Plectrophenax nivalis*,  
Snow Bunting

## Nivalis *ni-VAL-is*

*Nivis*, snow, as in *Plectrophenax nivalis*, the Snow Bunting

## Niveigularis *ni-vee-eye-goo-LAR-is*

*Nivis*, snow, and *gularis*, throat, as in *Tyrannus niveigularis*, the Snowy-throated Kingbird

## Nivea *NI-vee-a*

*Nivis*, snow, as in *Pagadroma nivea*, the Snow Petrel

## Nobilis *no-BIL-us*

Known or famous, as in *Moho nobilis*, the extinct Hawaii Oo

## Nonnula *non-NOO-la*

Greek, *nonna*, nun, and *-ulus*, diminutive, as in *Nonnula ruficapilla*, the Rufous-capped Nunlet, closely related to nunbirds

## Notabilis *no-TA-bil-is*

Notable, remarkable, as in *Nestor notabilis*, the Kea, common name from its call

## Notata, -us *no-TA-ta/tus*

*Notat*, marked, as in *Meliphaga notata*, the Yellow-spotted Honeyeater

## Nothocercus *no-tho-SIR-cus*

Greek, *nothos*, counterfeit, and Latin, *cercus*, tail, as in *Nothocercus julius*, the Tawny-breasted Tinamou, whose tail is virtually absent

## Nothoprocta *no-tho-PROK-ta*

Greek, *nothos*, counterfeit, and *proktos*, anus or hindpart, as in *Nothoprocta ornata*, the Ornate Tinamou; counterfeit refers to the hidden tail

## Nothura *no-THUR-a*

Greek, *nothos*, counterfeit, and *oura*, tail as in *Nothura maculosa*, the Spotted Nothura; counterfeit refers to the hidden tail

## Notiochelidon *no-tee-o-KEL-ih-don*

Greek, *notios*, southern, and *chelidon*, swallow, as in *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*, the Blue-and-white Swallow

## Notornis *no-TOR-nis*

Greek, *notos*, the south, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Notornis* (now *Porphyrio*) *mantelli*, the Mohoau

## Novaeguineae *no-vee-GWIN-ee-ee*

New Guinea, as in *Dacelo novaeguineae*, the Laughing Kookaburra

## Novaehollandiae *no-vee-hol-LAND-ee-ee*

After New Holland, historical name for Australia, as in *Anhinga novaehollandiae*, the Australasian Darter

*Notornis* (now *Porphyrio*) *mantelli*,  
Mohoau



## Novaeseelandiae *no-vee-se-LAND-ee-eye*

After Zealandia, Zealand, Netherlands; historical name for New Zealand, as in *Aythya novaeseelandiae*, the New Zealand Scaup

## Noveboracensis *no-va-bor-a-SEN-sis*

Latinized form of New York, as in *Seiurus noveboracensis*, the Northern Waterthrush

## Nuchalis *noo-KAL-is*

*Nucha*, nape, *-alis*, belonging to, as in *Glareola nuchalis*, the Rock Pratincole, with a white collar across its nape

## Nucifraga *noo-si-FRAG-a*

*Nux*, nut, and *frangere*, to break, as in *Nucifraga columbiana*, Clark's Nutcracker, named after the explorer William Clark

## Nudiceps *NOO-di-seps*

*Nudus*, bare, and *ceps*, head, as in *Gymnocichla nudiceps*, the Bare-crowned Antbird

## Nudicollis *noo-di-KOL-lis*

*Nudus*, bare, and *collis*, throat, as in *Procnias nudicollis*, the Bare-throated Bellbird

## Nuditarsus *noo-di-TAR-sus*

*Nudus*, bare, and *tarsus*, ankle, as in *Aerodramus nuditarus*, the Bare-legged Swiftlet

## Numenius *noo-MEN-ee-us*

Greek, *noumenios*, curlew, as in *Numenius phaeopus*, the Whimbrel

## Numida *noo-MID-a*

Greek, *nomas*, nomad, as in *Numida meleagris*, the Helmeted Guineafowl. These birds can wander several miles a day in search of food

## Nuttallii *nut-TAL-lee-eye*

After Thomas Nuttall, English botanist and zoologist, as in *Picoides nuttallii*, Nuttall's Woodpecker

## Nuttingi *NUT-ting-eye*

After Charles Nutting, American naturalist and collector, as in *Myiarchus nuttingi*, Nutting's Flycatcher

## Nyctanassa *nik-ta-NAS-sa*

Greek, *nyx*, night, and *anassa*, queen, as in *Nyctanassa violacea*, the Yellow-crowned Night Heron

## Nyctibius *nik-TIB-ee-us*

Greek, *nyx*, night, and, *bios*, living, as in *Nyctibius grandis*, the nocturnal Great Potoo



*Glareola nuchalis*,  
Rock Pratincole

## Nycticorax *nik-ti-KOR-aks*

Greek, *nyx*, night, and Latin, *corax*, raven, as in *Nycticorax nycticorax*, the Black-crowned Night Heron

## Nycticryphes *nik-ti-KRI-fee-z*

Greek, *nyx*, night, and *cryptos*, hidden, as in *Nycticryphes semicollaris*, the South American Painted-snipe, a crepuscular (dusk) to somewhat nocturnal bird

## Nyctidromus *nik-ti-DROM-us*

Greek, *nyx*, night, and *dromos*, runner, as in *Nyctidromus albigollis*, the Pauraque, a nocturnal bird, the common name from a Spanish transliteration of the call

## Nyctiprogne *nik-tih-PROG-nee*

Greek, *nyx*, night, and Progne, a figure in Greek mythology who was turned into a swallow, as in *Nyctiprogne leucopyga*, the Band-tailed Nighthawk

## Nyctyornis *nik-tee-OR-nis*

Greek, *nyx*, night, and *ornis*, a bird, as in *Nyctyornis aethertoni*, the Blue-bearded Bee-eater, mistakenly described as nocturnal. Its long throat feathers give it its common name

## Nymphicus *nim-FIK-us*

*Nympha*, nymph, and *-icus*, belonging to, derived from, as in *Nymphicus hollandicus*, the Cockatiel, named by the first Europeans to see the bird in Australia for its beauty

## Nystalus *nis-TAL-us*

Greek, *nustaleos*, sleepy, as in *Nystalus maculatus*, the Caatinga Puffbird, from its lethargic behavior



# KONRAD LORENZ

(1903–1989)

Konrad Lorenz, zoologist, ethologist, and Ornithologist, was born in Austria in 1903. His most significant accomplishment was sharing the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Nikolaas Tinbergen and Karl von Frisch. Lorenz studied instinctive behavior in birds and was one of the founders of the science of ethology (animal behavior). He was especially known for his explanation of imprinting, behavior that develops without any prior experience and remains for the animal's life. Lorenz credits his parents with imprinting him with a life-long love for animals and passion for birds.

Lorenz went to medical school at the University of Vienna, earned his MD, and served as an assistant professor of anatomy until 1935. Later he earned a PhD in Zoology at the same institution. Lorenz was a friend and student of renowned biologist Sir Julian Huxley, and after graduating, he met Nikolaas Tinbergen, who became a good friend and colleague. Both were interested in aspects of instinct and collaborated on studies of geese, both wild and domestic.



In 1938 Lorenz became a member of the Nazi Party and dedicated his work to the “ideas of the National Socialists.” He later denied being a party member, minimized the extent of the Holocaust, and claimed he was not anti-Semitic, though his letters show otherwise.

In 1940 Lorenz became a professor of psychology at the University of Königsberg. A year later he was conscripted into the German Army as a clinical psychologist. Near the end of the war in 1944 he was sent to the Russian front and was held as a prisoner of war for four years. He continued his studies even as a prisoner and kept a pet starling as a companion.

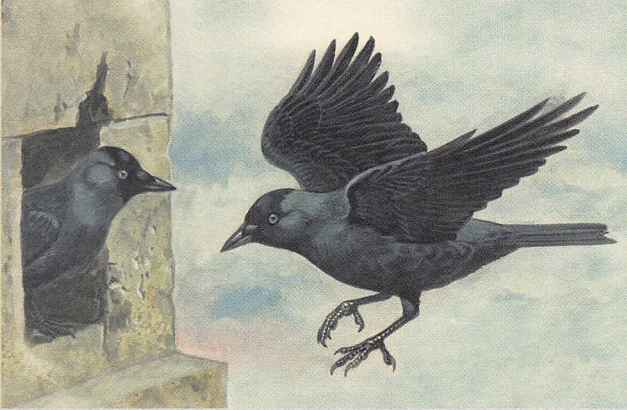
In 1958, Lorenz was employed at the Max Planck Institute for Behavioral Physiology and remained there until 1973, the year he received his shared Nobel Prize. Besides the Nobel Prize, Lorenz received other honors, including the Austrian Decoration for Science and Art (1964) and the Gold Medal of the Humboldt Society (1972).

Lorenz was the author of several books. Perhaps his best known are *King Solomon's Ring* and *On Aggression*, both written for a general audience. In the first book Lorenz asserts that his power to communicate with animals is comparable to King Solomon's. *On Aggression* argues that all animals, especially males, are aggressive as a way to gain and protect resources.

Here, Lorenz, right, walks with Nikolaas Tinbergen, fellow Nobel Prize laureate who also worked with birds.

"Truth in science can be defined as the working hypothesis best suited to open the way to the next better one."

Konrad Lorenz



*Coloeus monedula*,  
Western Jackdaw

Jack, from late fourteenth-century England, refers to one of lower class, and daw, comes from an old English name of the bird.

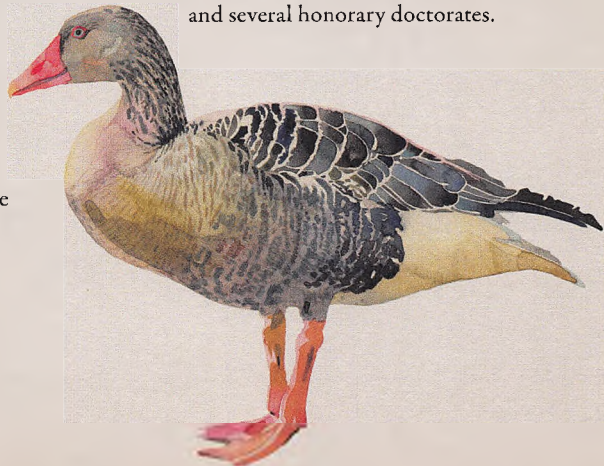
mechanism, a process by which a stimulus evokes a response when the connection between the two is inborn, to explain instinctive behaviors. To prove this hypothesis, they studied the behavior of

A couple of his influences were German ornithologist Oskar Heinroth and American biologist Charles Whitman, who studied birds without any preconception of what they were supposed to do or be. Heinroth and Whitman influenced Lorenz's ideas on instinct as it applied to avian social behavior. He captured a Western Jackdaw, *Coloeus monedula*, tamed it, noted its behavior, and eventually established a colony of the birds in the family home. His first published scientific paper (1927) described the social behavior of jackdaws.

Considered the father of ethology, Lorenz wrote numerous books on the subject. Working with Nikolaas Tinbergen, he developed the idea of an innate releasing

birds and co-authored a paper on the rolling behavior of Greylag Geese, *Anser anser*. At the sight of a single egg outside of the nest, the Greylag Goose will roll the egg back to the others with its beak. If the egg is removed, the animal continues to engage in egg-rolling behavior, pulling its head back as if there were still an egg there.

Although a controversial figure, Lorenz received many significant awards in ornithology and several honorary doctorates.



*Anser anser*,  
Greylag Goose

The Greylag Goose is the ancestor of all domestic geese, including the white ones for the dinner table.

## O

**Oatesi** *OATS-eye*

After Eugene Oates, British civil servant in India, as in *Hydromis oatesi*, the Rusty-naped Pitta

**Oberholseri** *ob-ber-HOLT-ser-eye*

After Harry Oberholser, American ornithologist, as in *Empidonax oberholseri*, the American Dusky Flycatcher

**Obscurus**, -a *ob-SKUR-us/a*

Obscure, as in *Dendragapus obscurus*, the Dusky Grouse; obscure refers to the dull color

**Obsoletus**, -a *ob-so-LEE-tus/ta*

Plain, ordinary, as in *Salpinctes obsoletus*, the Rock Wren

**Obtusa** *ob-TOO-sa*

*Obtus*, dull, blunt, as in *Vidua obtusa*, the Broad-tailed Paradise Whydah

**Occidentalis** *ok-si-den-TAL-is*

*Occidere*, to fall, as the sun in the west, hence western, as in *Larus occidentalis*, the Western Gull

**Occipitalis** *ok-si-pi-TAL-is*

*Occiput*, back of the head, as in *Dendrociitta occipitalis*, the Sumatran Treepie, with a white nape

**Occulta** *ok-KUL-ta*

*Occultus*, hidden, concealed, as in *Pterodroma occulta*, the Vanuatu Petrel; the species name reflects that little is known about this bird

**Oceanica**, -us *o-see-AN-ih-ka/kus*

*Oceanus*, ocean, as in *Ducula oceanica*, the Micronesian Imperial Pigeon, which lives on islands of the Pacific

**Oceanicus**, -a *o-see-AN-ih-kus/ka*

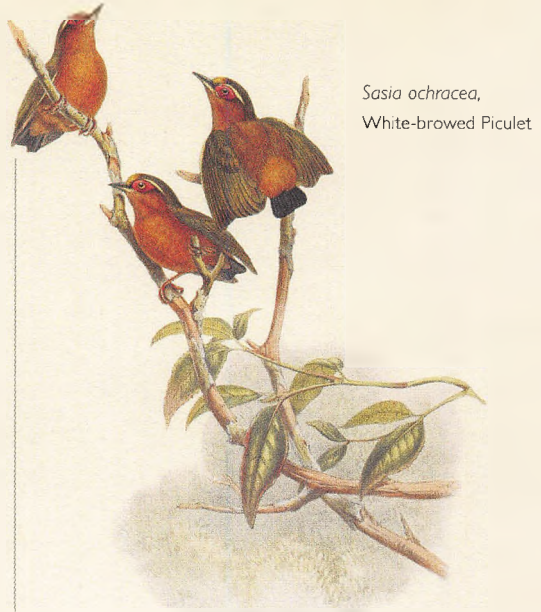
Greek, *oceanic*, as in *Oceanites oceanicus*, Wilson's Storm Petrel

**Oceanites** *o-see-an-EYE-teez*

Greek, god of the sea, as in *Oceanites gracilis*, Elliot's Storm Petrel

**Oceanodroma** *o-see-an-o-DROM-a*

*Oceanus*, ocean, and *dromos*, running, as in *Oceanodroma furcata*, the Forked-tail Storm Petrel, which "runs" on the ocean's surface



*Sasia ochracea*,  
White-browed Piculet

**Ocellata**, -um, -us *o-sel-LAT-a/um/us*

*Ocellus*, eye, and *-ata*, having, as in *Meleagris ocellata*, the Ocellated Turkey, with eyespots on the tail

**Ochotensis** *o-ko-TEN-sis*

Greek, refers to the Sea of Okhotsk, as in *Locustella ochotensis*, Middendorff's Grasshopper Warbler, which has an Asian distribution

**Ochracea** *o-KRACE-ee-a*

*Ochra*, pale yellow, as in *Sasia ochracea*, the White-browed Piculet

**Ochraceiceps** *o-krace-ee-EYE-seps*

*Ochra*, pale yellow, and *ceps*, headed, as in *Hylophilus ochraceiceps*, the Tawny-crowned Greenlet

**Ochraceifrons** *o-krace-ee-EYE-fronz*

*Ochra*, pale yellow, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Grallaricula ochraceifrons*, the Ochre-fronted Antpitta

**Ochraceiventris** *ok-ra-see-eye-VEN-tris*

*Ochra*, pale yellow, and *ventris*, belly, as in *Leptotila ochraceiventris*, the Ochre-bellied Dove

**Ochraceus**, -a *ok-RACE-ee-us/a*

Pale yellow, as in *Contopus ochraceus*, the Ochraceous Pewee

**Ochrocephala** *ok-ra-se-FAL-a*

*Ochra*, pale yellow, and *cephala*, head, as in *Amazona ochrocephala*, the Yellow-crowned Amazon



**Ochrogaster** *ok-kro-GAS-ter*

*Ochra*, pale yellow, and Greek, *gaster*, stomach, as in *Penelope ochrogaster*, the Chestnut-bellied Guan

**Ochrolaemus** *o-kro-LEE-mus*

*Ochra*, pale yellow, and Greek, *laemus*, throat, as in *Automolus ochrolaemus*, the Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner

**Ochthoeca** *ak-THO-ee-ka*

Greek, *okthos*, mound, and *oikos*, home, as in *Ochthoeca* (now *Silvicultrix*) *frontalis*, the Crowned Chat-Tyrant, which forages from mounds of moss and dead bamboo

**Ochthornis** *ak-THOR-nis*

Greek, *okthos*, mound, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Ochthornis littoralis*, the Drab Water Tyrant, which often sits upon exposed roots or piles of debris along riverbanks

**Ocreatus**, -ta *o-kree-AH-tus/ta*

*Ocrea*, leg covering, as in *Ocreatus underwoodii*, the Booted Racket-tail

**Ocularis** *a-koo-LAR-is*

*Oculus*, eye, of the eye, as in *Ploceus ocularis*, the Spectacled Weaver

**Oculocincta** *o-koo-lo-SINK-ta*

*Oculus*, eye, and *cinctus*, girdle, crown as in *Oculocincta squamifrons*, the Pygmy White-eye

**Ocyalus** *o-see-AL-us*

Greek, *Ocale*, one of the mythical Amazons, as in *Ocyalus latirostris*, the Band-tailed Oropendola

**Ocyceros** *o-see-SER-os*

Greek, *oxy*, sharp, and *keras*, horn, as in *Ocyceros birostris*, the Indian Gray Hornbill

**Ocyphaps** *O-see-faps*

Greek, *oxy*, sharp, and *phaps*, dove, as in *Ocyphaps lophotes*, the Crested Pigeon

**Odontophorus** *o-don-toe-FOR-us*

Greek, *odontos*, tooth, and *phoreus*, bearer, as in *Odontophorus melanotis*, the Black-eared Wood Quail, with serrated maxilla

**Odontorchilus** *o-don-tor-KIL-us*

Greek, *odontos*, tooth, and *cheilos*, lip as on a pitcher, as in *Odontorchilus cinereus*, the Tooth-billed Wren

**Odontospiza** *o-don-to-SPY-za*

Greek, *odontos*, tooth, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Odontospiza griseicapilla*, the Gray-headed Silverbill, which has a very toothlike bill

**Oena** *o-EE-na*

Greek, *oinas*, meaning pigeon, referring to the color of nearly ripened grapes, as in *Oena capensis*, the Namaqua Dove, from the Nama people of southern Africa

**Oenanthe** *o-ee-NAN-thee*

Greek, *oine*, vine, and *anthus*, blossom, as in *Oenanthe monticola*, the Mountain Wheatear, so called because of its spring appearance (after migration) at the time when wine vines blossom

**Oglei** *O-gul-eye*

After M. J. Ogle, British surveyor and collector, as in *Stachyris oglei*, the Snowy-throated Babbler

**Oidemia** *oy-DEE-mee-a*

Greek, swelling, as in *Oidemia* (now *Melanitta*) *nigra*, the Common Scoter, with a swollen bill

*Ocreatus underwoodii*,  
Booted Racket-tail



**Oleagineus** *o-lee-a-JIN-ee-us*

Of the olive, as in *Mionectes oleagineus*, the Ochre-bellied Flycatcher

**Olivacea**, -um, -us *o-liv-ACE-see-a/um/us*

Olive-green colored, as in *Spinus olivacea*, the Olivaceous Siskin

**Olivii** *o-LIV-ee-eye*

After Edmund Olive, Australian naturalist and collector, as in *Turnix olivii*, the Buff-breasted Buttonquail

**Olor** *O-lor*

Swan, as in *Cygnus olor*, the Mute Swan

**Olorogi** *OL-rog-eye*

After Claes Olog, Swedish ornithologist, as in *Cinclodes olrogi*, Olog's Cinclodes

**Omissa** *o-MIS-sa*

Missing, omitted, as in *Foudia omissa*, the Forest Fody, which is sometimes considered as part of another species and thus overlooked

**Oncostoma** *on-ko-STOM-a*

Greek, *onco*, mass, body size, and *stoma*, mouth, as in *Oncostoma olivaceum*, the Southern Bentbill

**Onychognathus** *on-ee-kog-NA-thus*

Greek, *onycho*-, claw, nail, and *gnathos*, jaw, as in *Onychognathus neumanni*, Neumann's Starling, with a heavy curved bill

**Onychoprion** *on-ee-ko-PRY-on*

Greek, *onux*, claw, nail, and *prion*, saw, as in *Onychoprion lunatus*, the Spectacled Tern; the bird's middle claw has small serrations

**Onychorhynchus** *on-ee-ko-RINK-us*

Greek, *onux*, claw, nail, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Onychorhynchus coronatus*, the Amazonian Royal Flycatcher, with a hooked bill

**Ophryisia** *o-FRIS-ee-a*

Greek, *ophrys*, eyebrow, as in *Ophryisia superciliosa*, the likely extinct Himalayan Quail, with a white supercilium (eyebrow)

**Opisthocomus** *o-pis-tho-KO-mus*

Greek, *opistho*, behind, backward, and *comus*, hair, as in *Opisthocomus hoazin*, the Hoatzin, whose head is topped by a spiky crest

**Opisthoprora** *o-pis-tho-PRO-ra*

Greek, *opistho*, behind, backward, and *prora*, prow, as in *Opisthoprora euryptera*, the Mountain Avocetbill, with an unusual bill for a hummingbird



*Oreomanes fraseri*,  
Giant Conebill

**Oporornis** *o-por-OR-nis*

Greek, *opora*, autumn, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Oporornis agilis*, the Connecticut Warbler

**Orchesticus** *or-KES-ti-kus*

*Orchestra*, a place for dancers to perform, and *icas*, belonging to (i. e. dancer), as in *Orchesticus abeillei*, the Brown Tanager; though rarely observed, its courtship display may explain the name

**Oreocharis** *or-ee-o-KAR-is*

*Oros*, mountain, and Greek, *charis*, graciousness, gratitude, beauty, as in *Oreocharis arfaki*, the Tit Berrypecker, an attractive bird that typically live in mountain forest above 2,200 meters

**Oreoica** *or-ee-O-ik-a*

*Oros*, mountain, and *-ica*, belonging to, as in *Oreoica gutturalis*, the Crested Bellbird, which lives in mountain habitats

**Oreomanes** *or-ee-o-MAN-eez*

*Oros*, mountain, and *manes*, spirit, as in *Oreomanes fraseri*, the Giant Conebill; the bird's spirit is in the mountains (the Andes)

**Oreomystis** *or-ee-o-MIS-tis*

*Oros*, mountain, and *mysticus*, mystic, as in *Oreomystis bairdi*, the Akikiki, which lives only in the highest rainforest habitats of Kauai, Hawaii

**Oreonympha** *or-ee-o-NIM-fa*

*Oros*, mountain, and *nympha*, nymph, goddess of the mountains, as in *Oreonympha nobilis*, the Bearded Mountaineer

## Oreophasis *or-ee-o-FAY-sis*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and Latin, *phasianus*, pheasant, as in *Oreophasis derbianus*, the Horned Guan, which lives in mountain habitats

## Oreophilus *or-ee-o-FIL-us*

Greek, *oros*, mountain and *philos*, love, loving, as in *Buteo oreophilus*, the Mountain Buzzard

## Oreophylax *or-ee-o-FYE-laks*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and *phylax*, guard, protect, as in *Oreophylax* (now *Asthenes moreirae*, the Itatiaia Spinetail; Itatiaia is a Brazilian municipality

## Oreopsittacus *or-ee-op-SIT-ti-kus*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and Latin, *psittacus*, parrot, as in *Oreopsittacus arfaki*, the Plum-faced Lorikeet, which lives in mountain habitats

## Oreornis *or-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Oreornis chrysogenys*, the Orange-checked Honeyeater, which lives in mountain habitats

## Oreortyx *or-ee-OR-tiks*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and Latin *ortyx*, quail, as in *Oreortyx pictus*, the Mountain Quail (see box)

## Oreoscopes *or-ee-o-SCOP-teez*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and *scopes*, mimic, as in *Oreoscopes montanus*, the Sage Thrasher, or the Mountain Mockingbird

## Oreoscopus *or-ee-o-SKO-pus*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and *scopus*, watcher, as in *Oreoscopus gutturalis*, the Fernwren

## Oreothraupis *or-ee-o-THRAW-pis*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and *thraupis*, a small bird, as in *Oreothraupis arremonops*, the Tanager Finch

*Oreortyx pictus*,  
Mountain Quail



## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

The only member of its genus, the Mountain Quail (*Oreortyx pictus*) lives mainly in the mountains of the western US. *Pictus*, from the Latin, is an adjective meaning painted or embroidered, and one look at this bird and you will know why. The gray of the chest, nape, and top of the head contrasts with the rusty-red and white belly and flanks. The long feathers of its crest remind one of an exclamation point. Typically found at elevations of 2,300 to 990 feet (700 to 300 meters), they will migrate altitudinally to avoid snow-covered ground in the winter and move as far as 20 miles (32 kilometers) between seasons to remain in suitable habitat.

## Orientalis *or-ee-en-TAL-is*

Of the east, as in *Merops orientalis*, the Green Bee-eater

## Oriolus, -lia *or-ee-O-lus/lee-a*

*Aureolus*, gold, golden, as in *Oriolus flavocinctus*, the Green Oriole

## Ornata, -tus *or-NA-ta/tus*

Ornate, as in *Urocissa ornata*, the Sri Lanka Blue Magpie

## Ornithion *or-NITH-ee-on*

Greek, *ornis*, bird, and Latin, *-ion*, being, as in *Ornithion inermis*, the White-lored Tyrannulet

## Oroaetus *or-o-EE-tus*

Greek, *oros*, mountain, and *aetos*, eagle, as in *Oroaetus* (now *Spizaetus) isidori*, the Black-and-chestnut Eagle



**Ortalis** *or-TAL-is*

Greek, chicken, as in *Ortalis vetula*, the Plain Chachalaca, an onomatopoeic name for the call

**Orthogonys** *or-tho-GON-is*

Greek, *orthos*, straight, and *genys*, jaw, as in *Orthogonys chloricterus*, the Olive-green Tanager

**Orthonyx** *or-THON-iks*

Greek, *orthos*, straight, and *onux*, claw, as in *Orthonyx novaeguineae*, the Papuan Logrunner

**Orthopsittaca** *or-thop-SIT-tak-a*

Greek, *orthos*, straight, and Latin, *psittaca*, parrot, as in *Orthopsittaca manilatus*, the Red-bellied Macaw

**Orthorhyncus** *or-tho-RINK-us*

Greek, *orthos*, straight, and *rhynchos*, bill, as in *Orthorhyncus cristatus*, the Antillean Crested Hummingbird, with a straight bill, indicative of generalist hummingbirds

**Orthotomus** *or-tho-TOE-mus*

Greek, *orthos*, straight, and *tomus*, piece, section, as in *Orthotomus sutorius*, the Common Tailorbird, which pierces the edges of a leaf, rolls it over and sews the edges together to form the base for a nest

**Ortygospiza** *or-ti-go-SPY-za*

Greek, *ortux*, quail, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Ortygospiza atricollis*, the Quailfinch

**Ortyxelos** *or-tiks-EL-os*

Greek, *ortux*, quail, and *elos*, low ground, as in *Ortyxelos meiffrenii*, the Quail-plover

**Ortyzivorus**, *-a or-riz-ih-VOR-us/a*

*Oryza*, rice, and *vorus*, eat, swallow, as in *Dolichonyx ortyzivorus*, the Bobolink; refers to the bird's liking for (cultivated) rice and other grains

**Ossifragus** *os-si-FRAY-gus*

*Ossis*, bone, and *frangere*, break, as in *Corvus ossifragus*, the Fish Crow. Its diet includes fish, the bones of which it breaks whilst eating

**Ostralegus** *os-tra-LEG-us*

Greek, *ostreon*, oyster, and *lego*, gather, as in *Haematopus ostralegus*, the Eurasian Oystercatcher

**Otidiphaps** *o-TI-di-faps*

Greek, *otis*, bustard, and *phaps*, wild pigeon, as in *Otidiphaps nobilis*, the Pheasant Pigeon

**Otis** *O-tis*

Greek, *otis*, bustard, as in *Otis tarda*, the Great Bustard

**Otus** *O-tus*

Little horned owl, as in *Otus asio*, the Eastern Screech Owl

**Oustaleti** *oo-sta-LET-eye*

After Emile Oustalet, French zoologist, as in *Cinnyris oustaleti*, Oustalet's Sunbird

**Oxylabes** *aks-ih-LAY-beez*

Greek, *oxus*, sharp, and Latin, *labe*, slip, slide, as in *Oxylabes madagascariensis*, the White-throated Oxylabes, with a sharp bill

**Oxypogon** *aks-ee-PO-gon*

Greek, *oxus*, sharp, and, *pogon*, beard, as in *Oxypogon guerinii*, the Bearded Helmetcrest

**Oxyruncus** *aks-ee-RUN-kus*

Greek, *oxus*, sharp, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Oxyruncus cristatus*, the Sharpbill

**Oxyura**, *-us aks-ee-OO-ra/rus*

Greek, *oxus*, sharp, and *oura*, tail, as in *Oxyura jamaicensis*, the Ruddy Duck, a member of the stiff-tailed duck family

*Oxylabes madagascariensis*,  
White-throated Oxylabes

# OTUS

This genus is known as the scops owls due to a confusing taxonomic dispute in the eighteenth century when *Scops* was used as the genus name. The most recently discovered species, the Serendib Scops Owl (*O. thilohoffmanni*), was found in Sri Lanka in 2006.

Latin for eared owl,= the genus name *Otus* probably was a reference to the feather tufts that resemble ears. *Otus* has 63 species, including Scops-Owls and Screech Owls. Most are small, have cryptic plumage with spots or streaks, and conspicuous ear tufts. These tufts have no hearing function but their position may indicate the mood of a bird or serve to break up the outline of the owl as it sits motionless in a tree. Owls have incredibly good hearing and can precisely locate prey because their external fleshy ears are different in shape from each other and positioned asymmetrically, thus enabling owls to triangulate the source of the sound because the sound waves are altered as they enter the ear.

Owls' large ears are matched by their large eyes and keen eyesight. A large owl's eyes are as big as a human's. The eyes are tubular and fixed in their skull by a ring of bony plates, but the birds can turn their heads 270 degrees and have excellent stereoscopic vision. They have a large number of light sensitive cells in their retina, and can theoretically see by the light of a match held 0.6 miles (1 kilometer) away.



*Otus gurneyi*,  
Giant Scops Owl

Contrary to popular belief, owls can see perfectly well in the daytime.

After locating their prey with their two outstanding senses, they fly almost noiselessly over the landscape to capture it, thanks to their special feather structure. The edges of their flight feathers are frayed, with a soft, downy covering to the feathers, so

when the owls fly, the feathers emit only low frequency sounds that their prey, like a mouse, cannot detect.

Owls have zygodactyl feet, two toes facing forward and two back, but they can reverse one toe so that they have three forward and one back. This may be an adaptation to make perching and catching prey easier. Owls eat invertebrates, small mammals, birds, and reptiles, which are swallowed whole or in big chunks. The food makes its way down to the muscular part of the stomach, the gizzard, where it is

ground. The digestible portion continues down the digestive tract but the undigestible parts—bones, feathers, fur—are compacted into an “owl pellet” and regurgitated.

*Otus* owls are found everywhere on earth except Antarctica and Australia and are most common in Asia.



*Otus silvicola* and *Otus alfredi*,  
Wallace's Scops Owl and  
Flores Scops Owl



# Common Names

A scientific name clearly designates a particular bird species, tells you something about the bird's relationship to other bird species, and usually provides a decent description of the bird. Common names are less useful for the former, because they vary so much from country to country, but apt for the latter. The obvious advantage common names have is their much easier pronunciation and spelling. And for English names, at least, the International Ornithologists' Union has recommended English common names and set standards for spelling and construction. There are still many problems with common names due to their long history and local variations.

There are common names like the Zitting Cisticola, *Cisticola juncidis*, Plain Chachalaca, *Ortalis vetula*, Kea, *Nestor notabilis*, or the Phainopepla, *Phainopepla nitens*, that tell you nothing about the bird. There are birds named after people, like Abert's Towhee, *Melospiza aberti*, or Salvin's Chuckwill, *Anthus salwini*, and those names aren't much more useful, although there has been a trend toward eliminating the personal name from the common name; hence *Oenanthe phillipsi*, Phillip's Wheatear, became the Somali Wheatear, Salvin's Chuckwill is now the Tawny-colored Nightjar, and Meyer's Sicklebill, *Epimachus meyeri*, got renamed the Brown Sicklebill. Helpfully, there are many common names that closely reflect the scientific

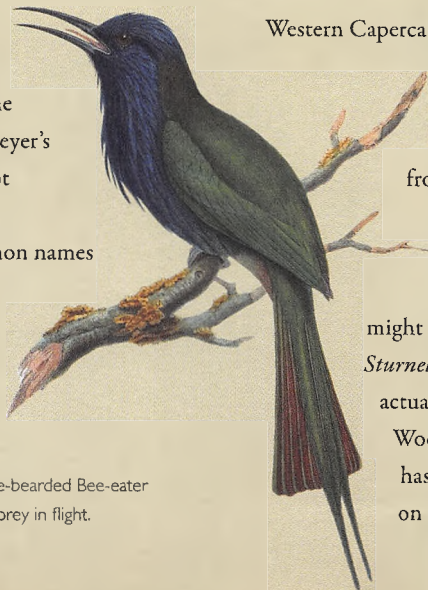
name such as the Green-headed Oriole, *Oriolus chlorocephalus*, and *Chen caerulescens*, the Snow or Blue Goose. But the opposite is also true; *Ploceus melanogaster*, meaning black-bellied weaver, has the common name of Black-billed Weaver; and *Myrmeciza melanocops*, the White-shouldered Antbird, whose scientific name means Black-headed Antbird. Sometimes the common name includes part of the scientific name such as *Oxylabes madagascariensis*, the White-throated Oxylabes, and *Rhabdornis mysticallis*, the Stripe-headed Rhabdornis.

Some common names have been changed for clarification or simplification: the Celebes Bearded Bee-eater, *Meropogon forsteni*, has been shortened to the Celebes Bee-eater; the Lance-billed Monklet has become the Lanceolated Monklet, *Micromonacha lanceolata*; and Mayr's Streaked Honeyeater is now simply Mayr's Honeyeater, *Ptiloprora mayri*.

Some common names come from the bird's calls, such as the Plain Chachalaca, Kea, and New Zealand Kaka, *Nestor meridionalis*; these are onomatopoeic words as they phonetically imitate the call. Common names also come from the local language, such as Western Capercaillie, *Tetrao urogallus*, from the

Scottish Gaelic; the Akohekohe, *Palmeria dolei*; and Tui, *Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*, from the Maori.

Odd things happen as well. Some common names mislead the reader; for example, you might think a Western Meadowlark, *Sturnella neglecta*, is a lark, when it is actually a blackbird. The Red-bellied Woodpecker, *Melanerpes carolinus*, has a not very obvious pinkish wash on its belly and the neck ring of the



*Meropogon forsteni*,  
Purple-bearded Bee-eater

A typical bee-eater, the Celebes or Purple-bearded Bee-eater is very colorful and captures large insect prey in flight.





*Ortalis vetula*,  
Plain Chachalaca

Like many birds with odd common names, the Plain Chachalaca gets its name from its call.

Ring-necked Duck, *Aythya collaris*, is almost impossible to see in the field. Dove and pigeon are used pretty interchangeably, the difference being that the former is of Anglo-Saxon origin and the latter French. Same for the Germanic-derived name heron and the French-derived egret appellation.

There are lots of regional and country differences. Loons, as they are known in America, are referred to as divers in Europe. And while Americans call *Buteo* species hawks, the British call them buzzards. There are also spelling differences like grey vs. gray and colour vs. color; the International Ornithologists' Union standards lean toward using the British spelling.

Common names, like the scientific names, keep evolving. The European Robin, *Erithacus rubecula*, was originally called Redbreast, then Robin Redbreast, Ruddock, Robinet, and sometimes the English Robin. The familiar Rock Dove, *Columbia livia* has been called the Rock Pigeon, Carrier Pigeon, Common Pigeon, Homing Pigeon,

and Feral Pigeon. The Redbird became the Northern Cardinal, *Cardinalis cardinalis*; the Sea-swallow was renamed the Common Tern, *Sterna hirundo*; and in the US the Linnet became the House Finch, *Haemorhous mexicanus*. The Goldcrest, *Regulus regulus*, was once known as the Woodcock Pilot as it arrived in the spring at the same time as the Eurasian Woodcock, *Scolopax rusticola*. It was believed that Goldcrests were too small to migrate on their own and so arrived tucked into the feathers of the Woodcock.

Although both common and scientific naming are dynamic processes, there are standards for both. And it is certainly nice to be able to speak of the Coppersmith Barbet instead of the tongue-twisting *Megalaima haemacephala*!

*Buteo solitarius*,  
Hawaiian Hawk

Like most hawks, the endangered Hawaiian Hawk lives and hunts alone except during the breeding season.



## P

**Pachycare** *pak-ih-KAR-ee*

Greek, *pakhus*, thick, and *care*, head, as in *Pachycare flavogriseum*, the Goldenface, a member of the Pachycephalidae family, once known as "thickheads" because of their dumpy bodies and large heads

**Pachycephala**, -cephalopsis *pak-ih-se-FAL-a/pak-ih-se-fal-OP-sis*

Greek, *pakhus*, thick, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Pachycephala olivacea*, the Olive Whistler, with a large head

**Pachycoccyx** *pak-ih-KOK-siks*

Greek, *pakhus*, thick, and *coccyx*, cuckoo, as in *Pachycoccyx audeberti*, the Thick-billed Cuckoo

**Pachyptila** *pak-ip-TIL-a*

Greek, *pakhus*, thick, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Pachyptila desolata*, the Antarctic Prion, common name from Greek *prioni*, saw, referring to the serrated beak

**Pachyramphus** *pak-ih-RAM-fus*

Greek, *pakhus*, thick, and Latin, *ramphus*, beak, as in *Pachyramphus viridis*, the Green-backed Becard, from French *becarde*, beak

**Pachyrhyncha** *pak-ih-RINK-a*

Greek, *pakhus*, thick, and Latin, *rhynchus*, beak, as in *Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*, the Thick-billed Parrot

**Pacifica**, -us *pa-SIF-ik-a/us*

Of the Pacific Ocean, as in *Gavia pacifica*, the Pacific Loon or Diver

**Padda** *PAD-da*

Refers to paddy fields of rice, as in *Padda* (now *Lonchura*) *oryzivora*, the Java Sparrow



*Palmeria dolei*,  
Akohekohe

**Pagodroma** *pa-go-DROME-a*

Greek, *pagos*, cold, and *dromos*, running, as in *Pagodroma nivea*, the Snow Petrel

**Pagophila** *pa-go-FIL-a*

Greek, *pagos*, cold, and *philos*, loving, as in *Pagophila eburnea*, the Ivory Gull, which lives in the high Arctic

**Pallasii** *pal-LASS-ee-eye*

After Peter Pallas, German zoologist, as in *Cinclus pallasii*, Pallas's or the Brown Dipper

**Palliseri** *PAL-li-ser-eye*

After Edward and F. H. Palliser, collectors in Sri Lanka, as in *Elaphornis palliseri*, Palliser's or the Sri Lanka Bush Warbler

**Palmeria** *pal-MAIR-ee-a*

After Henry Palmer, collector on Hawaii, as in *Palmeria dolei*, the Akohekohe

**Pandion** *PAN-ee-on*

After a King of Athens whose daughters were turned into birds, as in *Pandion haliaetus*, the Western Osprey

**Panurus** *pan-OO-rus*

*Panu*, all, and *oura*, tail, as in *Panurus biarmicus*, the Bearded Reedling, with its small body and long tail

*Cinclus pallasii*,  
Pallas's or Brown Dipper



## Parabuteo *par-a-BOO-tee-o*

Greek, *para*, like or near, and *buteo*, hawk, as in *Parabuteo unicinctus*, Harris's Hawk. Audubon named this bird after his friend Edward Harris

## Paradigalla *par-a-di-GAL-la*

Greek, *para*, like or near, and Latin, *gallus*, chicken, as in *Paradigalla brevicauda*, the Short-tailed Paradigalla

## Paradisaea *par-a-DEES-ee-a*

Greek, *paradeisos*, a park or garden, as in *Paradisaea minor*, the Lesser Bird-of-paradise

## Paradoxornis *par-a-doks-OR-nis*

Greek, *paradoxos*, strange, amazing and *ornis*, bird, as in *Paradoxornis guttaticollis*, the Spot-breasted Parrotbill

## Pardalotus *par-da-LO-tus*

Greek, *pardalotos*, spotted, as in *Pardalotus punctatus*, the Spotted Pardalote

## Parkeri *PAR-ker-eye*

After Theodore Parker, American ornithologist, as in *Cercomacra parkeri*, Parker's Antbird

## Parotia *par-OT-ee-a*

Greek, *parotis*, the parotid gland, as in *Parotia sefilata*, the Western Parotia, *parotia* probably referring to head plumes behind the ear

## Parula *pa-ROO-la*

Diminutive of *parus*, titmouse or little tit, as in *Parula* (now *Setophaga*) *americana*, the Northern Parula

*Paradoxornis guttaticollis*,  
Spot-breasted Parrotbill



## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

From Middle English *poucock*, the peacock, native to southeast Asia, is known worldwide. *Pavo cristatus* describes the crested peacock, officially known as the Indian Peafowl. The fan-shaped crest on the head is impressive and distinctive, but the iridescent blue body and the spectacular train of tail feathers that spreads into a giant fan of iridescence with eyespots seem to beg for description. An interesting myth still given credence today in India is that the female peahen fertilizes her eggs by drinking the tears of the male peacock.

## Parus *PA-rus*

*Parus*, titmouse, as in *Parus major*, the Great Tit; tit perhaps from Norse *tita*, small bird

## Passer *PAS-ser*

Sparrow, as in *Passer domesticus*, the House Sparrow

## Passerculus *pas-ser-COO-lus*

Diminutive of *passer*, sparrow, as in *Passerculus sandwichensis*, the Savannah Sparrow

## Passerella *pas-ser-EL-la*

Diminutive of *passer*, sparrow, as in *Passerella iliaca*, the Fox Sparrow

## Passerherbulus *pas-ser-her-BOO-lus*

*Passer*, sparrow, and *herbulus*, little herb, as in *Passerherbulus* (now *Ammodramus*) *caudacutus*, Saltmarsh Sparrow

## Passerina *pas-ser-ee-na*

Diminutive of *passer*, sparrow, as in *Passerina caerulea*, the Blue Grosbeak

## Pavo *PA-vo*

Peacock, as in *Pavo cristatus*, the Indian or Blue Peacock (see box)

## Pealii *PEEL-ee-eye*

After Titian Peale, an American naturalist and artist, as in *Erythrura pealii*, the Fiji Parrotfinch



# PASSER

True sparrows belong to the genus *Passer* (*PAS-ser*), Latin for sparrow. There are about 27 species in the genus, most of which are distributed in the warmer climates of southern Eurasia and Africa. They are mainly ground-dwelling seedeaters but will take insects when raising young. Since the genus name means sparrow, it is up to the specific name to describe the bird, but that does not always work. The scientific name *P. flaveolus*, meaning golden, doesn't aptly describe the Plain-backed Sparrow any better than the common name. *P. italiae*, the Italian Sparrow, at least provides a locale, and *P. rutilans*, meaning reddish, auburn, works well for the Russet Sparrow.

Because the *Passer* sparrows are seedeaters, they have special adaptations in their jaws, hard palate, and tongue that help them manipulate and open seeds. The sparrows hold large seeds transversely and crack them open against the hard palate.

Sparrows enjoy bathing by standing in water puddles and ducking their heads under water. They also dust bathe by scratching out a depression



*Passer domesticus*,  
House Sparrow

in the soil and spreading their wings out. Bathing is followed by intensive preening that not only helps to rid the feathers of parasites, but supports the social unit. After bathing, the birds often gather to roost or sing.

Fully 17 of 27 species of *Passer* sparrows nest in or on human-made structures. Certainly the most widespread, abundant, and well-known of all sparrows is *P. domesticus*, the House Sparrow, completely adapted to human habitation. Once known as the English Sparrow, the House Sparrow has been introduced and has spread around the world. Its success over the last century has led to its being considered a pest. Introduced into New York in 1852, they now are found from northern Canada to Panama. During World War I in England, Sparrow Clubs were created to rid the countryside of House Sparrows, and in the 1960s Mao Tse-tung declared a war on House and Eurasian Tree Sparrows (*P. montanus*) and had millions killed, which is reputed to have led to severe famine a few years later as insects decimated the crops.

House Sparrows may still be deemed a pest by some, but because they are abundant and easy to keep in captivity, they have been used in over 5,000 scientific studies. An increase in pesticide use may be the cause of the huge decline in this species in Europe.



*Passer ammodendri*,  
Saxaul Sparrow

The Saxaul Sparrow, native to central Asia, is one of the larger *Passer* sparrows. Its head markings make it very distinctive.

## Pectoralis *pek-to-RA-lis*

*Pectoro-*, breast, chest, as in *Euphonia pectoralis*, the Chestnut-bellied Euphonia

## Pedionomus *ped-ee-o-NO-mus*

Greek, *pedion*, plain, field, and *nomos*, a home, as in *Pedionomus torquatus*, the Plains-wanderer

## Pelagodroma *pel-a-go-DRO-ma*

Greek, *pelagos*, sea, and *dromos*, runner, as in *Pelagodroma marina*, the White-faced Storm Petrel, for its habit of pattering its feet on the sea surface

## Pelecanoides *pel-eh-kan-OY-deez*

Greek, *pelekan*, pelican, and *oides*, resembles, as in *Pelecanoides urinatrix*, the Common Diving Petrel, which resembles a pelican

## Pelecanus *pel-eh-KAN-us*

Greek, *pelekan*, pelican, as in *Pelecanus conspicillatus*, the Australian Pelican

## Pelzelinii *pel-ZEL-nee-eye*

After August von Pelzel, Austrian ornithologist, as in *Tachybaptus pelzelinii*, the Madagascar Grebe

## Penelope *pen-EL-o-pee*

Greek, *Penelopeia*, feminine name, as in *Penelope albigennis*, the White-winged Guan

## Penicillatus *pen-ih-sil-LA-tus*

*Penicillus*, brush, as in *Phalacrocorax penicillatus*, Brandt's Cormorant; the breeding male has tufts of feathers on its head

## Pennula *pen-NOO-la*

Diminutive of *penna*, wing, as in *Pennula* (now *Porzana*) *sandwichensis*, the extinct Hawaiian Rail, a small-winged flightless bird

## Perdica *per-di-KOO-la*

*Perdix*, a partridge, and *cula*, little, as in *Perdica erythrorhyncha*, the Painted Bush Quail

## Perdix *PER-diks*

*Perdix*, a partridge, as in *Perdix perdix*, the Gray Partridge

## Pericrocotus *per-ih-kro-KO-tus*

Greek, *peri*, around, and *crocotus*, golden-yellow, as in *Pericrocotus roseus*, the Rosy Minivet

## Perisoreus *pe-ri-SOR-ee-us*

Unclear derivation but may refer to bird's habit of storing food, as in *Perisoreus infaustus*, the Siberian Jay

## Perissocephalus

*pe-ris-so-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *perissos*, strange, excessive, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Perissocephalus tricolor*, the Capuchinbird, which resembles a monk with its bald face and collar of feather

## Pernis *PER-nis*

Greek, corruption of *pternis*, bird of prey, as in *Pernis ptilorhynchus*, the Crested Honey Buzzard

## Peronii *per-OWN-ee-eye*

After Francois Péron, French explorer and naturalist, as in *Geokichla peronii*, the Orange-sided Thrush

## Personata, -us *per-son-AH-ta/tus*

*Persona*, masked, as in *Coracina personata*, the Wallacean Cuckooshrike

## Petiti *PE-ti-tye*

After Louis Petit, French naturalist, as in *Campophaga petiti*, Petit's Cuckooshrike

## Petrochelidon *pe-tro-KEL-ih-don*

*Petra*, rock, and Greek, *chelidon*, swallow, as in *Petrochelidon nigricans*, the Tree Martin, which nests in tree cavities and rock crevices

*Pelecanus conspicillatus*,

Australian Pelican



## Petroica *pe-TRO-ee-ka*

*Petra*, rock, and *-icus*, belonging to, as in *Petroica australis*, the New Zealand Robin, which uses rocks as hunting perches

## Petronia *pe-TRO-nee-a*

Greek, *petronius*, of a rock, as in *Petronia* (now *Gymnoris*) *superciliaris*, the Yellow-throated Petronia, which was mistakenly thought to be a rock dweller

## Peucedramus *poy-se-DRA-mus*

Greek, *peuke*, pine, and *dromos*, runner, as in *Peucedramus taeniatus*, the Olive Warbler, which feeds around pine trees

## Phacellodomus *fa-sel-lo-DO-mus*

Greek, *phakelos*, package, and *domos*, house, as in *Phacellodomus ruber*, the Greater Thornbird, which constructs a complex nest of twigs

## Phaenicophaeus *fee-ni-KO-fee-us*

Greek, *phoiniko*, crimson, and *phaeinus*, shining, as in *Phaenicophaeus* (now *Zanclostomus*) *javanicus*, the Red-billed Malkoha

## Phaeochroa *fee-o-KRO-a*

Greek, *phaeo*, dusky, and *chroa*, color, as in *Phaeochroa cuvierii*, the Scaly-breasted Hummingbird

## Phaeornis *fee-OR-nis*

Greek, *phaeo*, brown, dark, dusky, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Phaeornis* (now *Myadestes*) *obscurus*, the Omao

## Phaethon *FAY-eh-thon*

In Greek mythology Phaethon was the son of Helios, the sun, as in *Phaethon lepturus*, the White-tailed Tropicbird



*Phainoptila melanoxantha*,  
Black-and-yellow Phainoptila

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

The scientific name *Phainoptila melanoxantha*, meaning shining-feather black-yellow (bird), aptly describes the Black-and-yellow Phainoptila, a resident of the cloud forests of Costa Rica and part of Panama. It is one of three genera of silky flycatchers in the Ptiliogonatidae family. The term flycatcher refers to aerial insect-eating behavior, but in fact it is not related to the Muscicapidae (flycatcher) or Tyrannidae (tyrant) families of flycatchers. The bird's diet consists almost exclusively of fruits; insect-catching is a rare event.

## Phaethornis *fay-eh-THOR-nis*

See *Phaethon*, above, and Greek, *ornis*, bird, as in *Phaethornis ruber*, the Reddish Hermit

## Phainopepla *fay-no-PEP-LA*

Greek, *phaeinus*, shining, and *pepos*, robe or cloak, as in *Phainopepla nitens*, the Phainopepla, named for its silky plumage

## Phainoptila *fay-nop-TIL-a*

Greek, *phaeinus*, shining, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Phainoptila melanoxantha*, the Black-and-yellow Phainoptila (see box)

## Phalacrocorax *fal-a-kro-KOR-aks*

Greek, *phalakros*, bald, and *corus*, raven, as in *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*, the Neotropical Cormorant

## Phalaenoptilus *fal-ee-nop-TIL-us*

Greek, *phalaina*, moth, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*, the Common Poorwill, with soft grayish-brownish plumage

## Phalaropus *fal-a-RO-pus*

Greek, *phalaris*, coot, and *pous*, foot, as in *Phalaropus tricolor*, Wilson's Phalarope, with partial webbing on its feet, as seen in coots

## Phalcoboenus *fal-ko-BAY-nus*

Greek, *phalkon*, falcon, and *baino*, walking, as in *Phalcoboenus australis*, the Striated Caracara, often seen walking on the ground

## Phaps *FAPS*

Greek, *phaps*, dove or pigeon, as in *Phaps chalcoptera*, the Common Bronzewing



**Pharomachrus** *fa-ro-MAK-rus*

Greek, *pharos*, cloak, and *macro*s, long, large, as in *Pharomachrus auriceps*, the Golden-headed Quetzal

**Phasianus** *jay-see-AN-us*

From *phasiana*, a reference to the River Phasis (now Rioni, Georgia), where the Common Pheasant, *Phasianus colchicus*, was once common

**Pheucticus** *FOIK-ti-kus*

Greek, *pheuktikos*, shy or timid, as in *Pheucticus chrysogaster*, the Southern Yellow Grosbeak

**Philacte** *fil-AK-tee*

Greek, *philos*, like or love, and *akte*, shore, as in *Philacte* (now *Chen canagica*), the Emperor Goose

**Philepitta** *fil-eh-PIT-ta*

Greek, *philos*, love, and *pitta*, from the Telugu (an Indian language) word meaning small bird, as in *Philepitta castanea*, the Velvet Asity

**Philetairus** *fil-eh-TARE-us*

Greek, *philos*, love, and *hetairos*, companion, as in *Philetairus socius*, the Sociable Weaver

**Phillipsi** *FIL-lips-eye*

After E. Lort Phillips, British big game hunter, as in *Oenanthe phillipsi*, the Somali Wheatear

**Philomachus** *fil-o-MAK-us*

Greek, *philos*, like or love, and *makhe*, fight, battle, as in *Philomachus pugnax*, the Ruff, named for its aggressive behavior during lekking

**Phleocryptes** *flee-o-KRIP-teez*

Greek, *phleos*, an aquatic plant, and *cryptus*, hidden, as in *Phleocryptes melanops*, the Wren-like Rushbird

**Phloeocastres** *flo-ee-o-see-steez*

Greek, *phloios*, tree bark, and *keazo*, split, cleave, as in *Phloeocastres* (now *Campephilus*) *robustus*, the Robust Woodpecker, a bark splitter

**Phodilus** *fo-DIL-us*

Greek, *phos*, light, and *deilos*, afraid, fear, as in *Phodilus prigoginei*, the Congo Bay Owl

**Phoeniconaias** *foy-ni-KO-nye-as*

Greek, *phoinikos*, red, and *naias*, water nymph, as in *Phoeniconaias minor*, the Lesser Flamingo



*Philepitta castanea*,  
Velvet Asity

**Phoenicoparrus** *foy-ni-ko-PAR-rus*

Greek, *phoinikos*, red, and Latin *parra*, ominous bird, as in *Phoenicoparrus andinus*, the Andean Flamingo

**Phoenicopterus** *foy-ni-KOP-ter-us*

Greek, *phoinikos*, red, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Phoenicopterus roseus*, the Greater Flamingo, whose common name derives from the Latin *flamma*, flame

**Phoenicurus** *foy-ni-KOO-rus*

Greek, *phoinikos*, red, and *oura*, tail, as in *Phoenicurus frontalis*, the Blue-fronted Redstart

**Phrygilus** *fri-JIL-us*

Greek, *phrygilos*, a bird, and *-icus*, belonging to, as in *Phrygilus atriceps*, the Black-hooded Sierra Finch. From Aristophanes, who called anyone from Phrygia (part of modern Turkey) a *phrygilus*, or finch

**Phyllastrephus** *fil-la-STREF-us*

Greek, *phyllon*, leaf, and *strepho*, twist, as in *Phyllastrephus terrestris*, the Terrestrial Brownbul, which lives in dense, dry thickets of savannah or acacia

**Phylloscopus** *fil-lo-SKOPE-us*

Greek, *phyllon*, leaf, and *skopeo*, seek, as in *Phylloscopus borealis*, the Arctic Warbler, which spends much time feeding in the leafy canopies of trees

**Phytotoma** *fy-to-TO-ma*

Greek, *phuton*, plant, and *tomos*, a cut-off piece, as in *Phytotoma rutila*, the White-tipped Plantcutter

# PHOENICOPTERUS

The Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland* used flamingos as croquet mallets, presumably because of their long necks—longer than any other bird relative to body size—and their upside-down mallet-shaped heads with large bills. There are three genera of flamingos: Three species of *Phoenicopterus* (red-feathered), one species of *Phoeniconaias* (red naiad), and two species of *Phoenicoparrus* (red water bird). The word flamingo derives from the Spanish *flamenco*, meaning flame-colored.

The flamingo's bill allows it to feed like baleen whales; in both animals the inner part of the jaw is covered with numerous lamellae and the tongue, moving over these lamellae like a piston, filters out microorganisms from the water. These microorganisms, animal and plant plankton, contain carotenoids, protein pigments that give the birds their color. Because the concentration of these pigments in their food sources vary, the color of flamingo populations and individuals varies from whitish to red.

The six species of flamingo are found primarily in the southern hemisphere, but also in Spain, the Caribbean, and coasts from Arabia east to India. They are very social birds, often found in flocks numbering thousands of birds. At times Kenya's Lake Nakuru has over a million birds. The warm alkaline lake provides the birds abundant algae, which itself is dependent on the droppings of the birds for nutrients.



*Phoenicopterus roseus*,  
Greater Flamingo

The names of the birds are pretty straightforward. *P. roseus* (Latin, rose-colored) is the Greater Flamingo; *P. ruber* (Latin, red) is the American Flamingo; *P. chilensis* is the Chilean Flamingo; *P. minor* is the Lesser Flamingo; and

*P. andinus* is the Andean Flamingo. *P. jamesi*, James's Flamingo, was named after British tycoon Harry Berkley James, who sponsored an expedition that discovered the bird in Bolivia in 1886.

Flamingos build a volcano-shaped nest and usually lay one egg on the top. The gray-plumaged chick is born with a straight red bill that develops the adult curve later. Filter feeding by the adults poses a problem for feeding the young, but a special adaptation solves the problem. The crop, an expanded part of the esophagus, produces a protein-rich secretion that both the male and female feed to the young. It is called flamingo milk and is similar to pigeon milk.



*Phoeniconaias minor*,  
Lesser Flamingo

The three flamingo species are very similar in structure and habits and are only differentiated by minor differences in their feeding mechanism.

## Pica, -us *PIKE-a/us*

Latin for magpie, as in *Pica pica*, the Eurasian Magpie

## Picoides *pi-KOY-deez*

*Picus*, woodpecker, and *eidos*, shape, likeness, as in *Picoides arcticus*, the Black-backed Woodpecker

## Piculus *pi-KOO-lus*

*Picus*, woodpecker, and *-ulus*, diminutive, little, as in *Piculus litae*, the Lita Woodpecker

## Picumnus *pik-KUM-nus*

In Roman mythology, Picumnus was a god of fertility, as in *Picumnus exilis*, the Golden-spangled Piculet

## Pileata, -us *pil-ee-AH-ta/tus*

*Pileatus*, capped, as in *Piprites pileata*, the Black-capped Piprites

## Pinaroloxias *pin-a-ro-LOKS-ee-as*

Greek, *pinaros*, dirty, and *loxos*, slanting, as in *Pinaroloxias inornata*, the Cocos Finch

## Pinarornis *pin-a-ROR-nis*

Greek, *pinaros*, dirty, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Pinarornis plumosus*, the Boulder Chat, presumably because of its dirty, blackish color

## Pinguinus *pin-GWIN-us*

Welsh, *pen*, head, and *gwyn*, white, as in *Pinguinus impennis*, the extinct Great Auk, named for its similarity to penguins

## Pinicola *pin-ib-KO-la*

*Pinus*, pine, and *cola*, inhabitant, as in *Pinicola enucleator*, the Pine Grosbeak

## Pipilo *PIP-il-o*

*Pipo*, to chirp, as in *Pipilo* (now *Melospiza*) *fusca*, the Canyon Towhee

## Pipra *PIP-ra*

Greek, *pipra*, bird, as in *Dixiphia pipra*, the White-crowned Manakin

## Pipreola *pip-ree-O-la*

Greek, *pipra*, bird, and *-ola*, diminutive, as in *Pipreola formosa*, the Handsome Fruiteater

## Piprites *pip-RITE-eez*

Greek, *pipra*, bird, and *-ites*, belonging, as in *Piprites chloris*, the Wing-barred Piprites

## Piranga *pi-RANG-ga*

A Brazilian municipality, as in *Piranga rubra*, the Summer Tanager

## Pitangus *pi-TANG-us*

Tupi (native Brazilian), *pitangua*, meaning large flycatcher, as in *Pitangus sulphuratus*, the Great Kiskadee or Kiskadee Flycatcher

## Pithecopha *pith-eh-ko-FAY-ga*

Greek, *pithekos*, ape, and *phagein*, to eat, as in *Pithecopha jefferyi*, the Philippine or Monkey-eating Eagle

## Pitohui *pit-o-HOO-ee*

"Pitohui" is the sound made after a human tastes and immediately rejects the poisonous bird, as in *Pitohui dichrous*, the Hooded Pitohui

## Pitta *PIT-ta*

East Indian word for a small bird, as in *Pitta sordida*, the Hooded Pitta

## Pittasoma *pit-ta-SO-ma*

*Pitta*, East Indian word for a small bird, and Greek, *soma*, body, as in *Pittasoma rufopileatum*, the Rufous-crowned Antpitta

## Pityriasis *pit-ih-RYE-a-sis*

Greek, *pituron*, warts on the head, as in *Pityriasis gymnocephala*, the Bornean Bristlehead (*Pityriasis* is a flaking of the skin in humans)

## Platalea *plat-AL-ee-a*

Greek, *platy*, flat, as in *Platalea minor*, the Black-faced Spoonbill



*Piranga rubra*,  
Summer Tanager



## LATIN IN ACTION

*Podargus ocellatus*, the “lazy-footed bird with eyespots,” is the Marbled Frogmouth. The order Caprimulgiformes to which this bird belongs alludes to the idea that with their big mouths the birds of this order could suckle on goats’ teats, hence the old name “goatsucker.” Frogmouths are found across southeast Asia to Australia. Although they appear to have small beaks, their mouths are huge, so they not only devour insects, but small lizards, mice, birds, and snakes. Their feet are weak so the birds lie horizontally across a branch during the day, hidden by their cryptic plumage. They lay their eggs in a tree branch, nestless.

*Podargus ocellatus*,  
Marbled Frogmouth



## Plateni *PLAT-en-eye*

After Carl Platen, a German doctor and collector, as in *Dasyctrota plateni*, the Mindanao Pygmy Babbler

## Platycercus *plat-ib-SIR-kus*

Greek, *platy*, flat, and *cercus*, tail, as in *Platycercus adscitus*, the Pale-headed Rosella

## Platypsaris *plat-ip-SAR-is*

Greek, *platy*, flat, and *psar*, starling, as in *Platypsaris* (now *Pachyrhamphus*) *aglaiae*, the Rose-throated Becard

## Platyrinchus *plat-ib-RINK-us*

*Platys*, flat, and *rynchus*, bill, as in *Platyrinchus coronatus*, the Golden-crowned Spadebill

## Plautus *PLAW-tus*

*Plautus*, flat-footed, as in *Plautus* (now *Alle*) *alle*, the Little Auk or Dovekie, a bird that is clumsy on land

## Plectrophenax *plek-tro-FEN-aks*

Greek, *plectron*, spur or cock’s spur, and *phenax*, imposter, as in *Plectrophenax nivalis*, the Snow Bunting, with a long claw on the hind toe

## Plectropterus *plek-TROP-ter-us*

Greek, *plectron*, spur or cock’s spur, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Plectropterus gambensis*, the Spur-winged Goose, with a spur on each wing, used for attacking other water birds

## Plectorhyncha *plek-to-RINK-a*

Greek, *plectron*, spur or cock’s spur, and *rhynchos*, bill, as in *Plectorhyncha lanceolata*, the Striped Honeyeater, with a fine pointed bill

## Plegadis *ple-GA-dis*

Greek, *plegas*, scythe, sickle, as in *Plegadis falcinellus*, the Glossy Ibis, with a sickle-shaped bill

## Pleskei *PLES-kee-eye*

After Theodor Pleske, Russian zoologist and geographer, as in *Locustella pleskei*, Stryan’s or Pleske’s Grasshopper Warbler

## Plocepasser *plo-see-PAS-ser*

Greek, *plokeus*, weaver, and *passer*, sparrow, as in *Plocepasser superciliosus*, the Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver

## Ploceus *PLO-see-us*

Greek, *plokeus*, weaver, as in *Ploceus luteolus*, the Little Weaver

## Plumbeus, -a *PLUM-bee-us/a*

Leaden, the color of lead, as in *Myiopardus plumbeus*, the Gray Tit-Flycatcher

## Pluvialis, -anus *ploo-vee-AL-is/ploo-vee-AN-us*

*Pluvia*, rain, as in *Pluvialis squatarola*, the Gray Plover; plover from Old French *plovier*, meaning rainbird, as migratory flocks arrived at the rainy season

## Podargus *po-DAR-gus*

Greek, *pous*, foot, and *argos*, lazy, slow, as in *Podargus ocellatus*, the Marbled Frogmouth, named for its large froglike gape (see box)

## Podica *PO-di-ka*

Greek, *pous*, foot, and *-icus*, belonging to, as in *Podica senegalensis*, the African Finfoot, with lobed toes to aid propulsion through water

## Podiceps *PO-di-seps*

*Podex*, buttocks, vent, and *pes*, foot, as in *Podiceps major*, the Great Grebe; refers to the feet being located under the bird's "vent" (rear end)

## Podilymbus *po-di-LIM-bus*

*Podex*, buttocks, vent, and *colymbus*, swimming pool or bath, as in *Podilymbus podiceps*, the Pied-billed Grebe, pied referring to its white bill with a black spot

## Poephila *po-eh-FIL-a*

Greek, *poa*, grass, and *philos*, love, as in *Poephila personata*, the Masked Finch

## Pogoniulus *po-gon-ee-OO-lus*

Greek, *pogon*, beard, and *-ulus*, diminutive, as in *Pogoniulus simplex*, the Green Tinkerbird, so-called because of its "tink-tink-tink" call. Little beard refers to the heavy facial bristles characteristic of the family, although not this particular bird

## Polihierax *po-lee-HY-er-aks*

Greek, *polios*, gray, and *hierax*, hawk, as in *Polihierax insignis*, the White-rumped Falcon

## Poliocephala, -us *po-lee-o-se-FAL-a/us*

Greek, *polios*, gray, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Chloephaga poliocephala*, the Ashy-headed Goose

## Polioptila *po-lee-op-TIL-a*

Greek, *polios*, gray, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Polioptila dumicola*, the Masked Gnatcatcher

## Polyborus *pol-ee-BOR-us*

Greek, *poly*, many and *boros*, devouring, as in *Polyborus* (now *Caracara*) *cheriway*, the Northern Crested Caracara, which eats a wide variety of live and dead foods

## Polyplectron *pol-ee-PLEK-tron*

Greek, *poly*, many and *plektron*, spur or cock's spur, as in *Polyplectron chalcurnum*, the Bronze-tailed Peacock-Pheasant; the male bird has two spurs on its leg

## Polysticta *pol-ee-STIK-ta*

Greek, *poly*, many and *stiktos*, dotted, dappled, as in *Polysticta stelleri*, Steller's Eider; although the bird has few spots, they are large and obvious

## Pomatorhinus *po-ma-to-RYE-nus*

Greek, *poma*, a cover, and *rhinos*, nose, as in *Pomatorhinus gravivox*, the Black-streaked Scimitar Babbler, scimitar from the long downcurved bill

## Poecetes *poo-eh-SEE-teez*

Greek, *poe*, grass, and *oiketes*, inhabitant, as in *Poecetes gramineus*, the Vesper Sparrow

## Porphyrio *por-FEER-ee-o*

Water hen, as in *Porphyrio porphyrio*, the Purple Swamphen

## Porphyrolaema *por-feer-o-LEE-ma*

Greek, *porphyros*, purple, and *laimos*, throat, as in *Porphyrolaema porphyrolaema*, the Purple-throated Cotinga, *cotinga* from Brazilian Tupi language

## Porphyrospiza *por-feer-o-SPY-za*

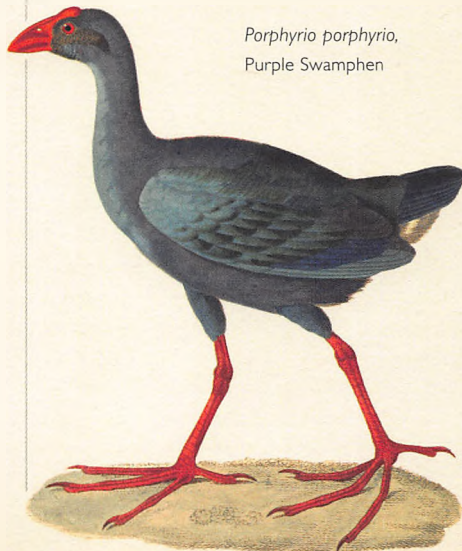
Greek, *porphyros*, purple, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Porphyrospiza caerulescens*, the Blue Finch

## Portoricensis *por-tor-ih-SEN-sis*

After Puerto Rico, as in *Spindalis portoricensis*, the Puerto Rican Spindalis. Common name apparently a misspelling and combination of other words

## Porzana *por-ZAN-a*

Italian, *porzana*, the name of the bird in Italy, as in *Porzana porzana*, the Spotted Crane, common name from Old Norse *kraka*, after the call



*Porphyrio porphyrio*,  
Purple Swamphen

**Premnoplex** *prem-NO-pleks*

Greek, *premnōn*, tree trunk, and *plexus*, knitting, interweaving, as in *Premnoplex tatei*, the White-throated Barbtail, which weaves its nest around a bough

**Pretrei** *PRET-tre-eye*

After Jean Pretre, French artist and illustrator, as in *Amazona pretrei*, the Red-spectacled Amazon

**Prigoginei** *pri-go-JEEN-eye*

After Alexandre Prigogine, Russian/Belgian naturalist, as in *Cinnyris prigoginei*, the Prigogine's Double-collared Sunbird

**Princeps** *PRIN-seps*

First, chief, first to take, as in *Accipiter princeps*, the New Britain Goshawk

**Prinia** *PRIN-ee-a*

Javanese, *prinya*, as in *Prinia polychroa*, the Brown Prinia

**Prionochilus** *pry-on-o-KIL-us*

Greek, *prion*, sawlike, and *kheilos*, a rim, edge, as in *Prionochilus maculatus*, the Yellow-breasted Flowerpecker, which has a beak with a serrated edge

**Prionops** *PRY-o-nops*

Greek, *prion*, sawlike, and *opsis*, appearance, as in *Prionops plumatus*, the White-crested Helmetshrike; refers to the fringed fleshy wattles around the eyes

**Probosciger** *pro-BOS-si-ger*

*Proboscis*, nose, snout and *ger*, bear, carry, as in *Probosciger aterrimus*, the Palm Cockatoo

**Procellaria** *pro-sel-LAR-ee-a*

*Procella*, storm, and *-arius*, referring to, as in *Procellaria parkinsoni*, the Black Petrel, a bird associated with storms

**Procelsterna** *pro-sel-STER-na*

*Procella*, storm, and *sterna*, tern, as in *Procelsterna albirostris*, the Gray Noddy; terns are often associated with storms

**Procnias** *PROC-nee-as*

Procne in Greek mythology, daughter of Pandion who was turned into a swallow, as in *Procnias nudicollis*, the Bare-throated Bellbird

**Prodotiscus** *pro-doe-TISS-kus*

*Prodo*, disclose, and *-iscus*, diminutive, as in *Prodotiscus regulus*, the Brown-backed Honeybird, which discloses the source of honey

**Progne** *PROG-nee*

Latin for Procne in Greek mythology, daughter of Pandion who was turned into a swallow, as in *Progne elegans*, the Southern Martin

**Promerops** *PRO-mer-ops*

*Pro*, for, and *merops*, bee-eater, as in *Promerops cafer*, the Cape Sugarbird

**Prosthemadera** *pros-theme-a-DER-a*

Greek, *prosthema*, an addition, and *dera*, neck or throat, as in *Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae*, the Tui, with a tuft of white feathers on its neck

**Protonotaria** *pro-to-no-TAR-ee-a*

*Protos*, first, and *notarius*, scribe, as in *Protonotaria citrea*, the Prothonotary Warbler. High-ranking notaries, prothonotaries, of the Byzantine Empire wore yellow robes, the color of the bird

**Prunella** *proo-NEL-la*

Corruption of *bruneus*, brown, as in *Prunella collaris*, the Alpine Accentor, with a basic brown color. *Accentor* comes from *ad*, with, and *cantor*, sing

**Przewalskii** *she-VAL-skee-eye*

After Nikolai Mikhaylovich Przhevalsky, Russian Cossack naturalist, as in *Paradoxornis przewalskii*, Przhevalski's Nuthatch

**Psalidoprocne** *sal-ih-doe-PROK-nee*

Greek, *psalis*, a knife or shears, and Procne from Greek mythology, daughter of Pandion who was turned into a swallow, as in *Psalidoprocne nitens*, the Square-tailed Saw-wing



*Psarisomus dalhousiae*,  
Long-tailed Broadbill



**Psaltriparus** *sal-tri-PAR-us*

*Psaltria*, female lute player, as in *Psaltriparus minimus*,  
American Bushtit, with a high-pitched call

**Psarisomus** *sar-ih-SO-mus*

Greek, *psaros*, speckled, and *soma*, body, as in *Psarisomus dalhousiae*,  
the Long-tailed Broadbill

**Psarocolius** *sar-o-KOL-ee-us*

Greek, *psar*, starling, and *kolios*, a kind of woodpecker, as in  
*Psarocolius viridis*, the Green Oropendola

**Pseudocalyptomena** *soo-doe-kal-ip-toe-MEN-a*

*Pseudo*, false, Greek, *calypto*, hidden, and *mena*, moon, as in  
*Pseudocalyptomena graueri*, Grauer's Broadbill, considered by the namer  
to resemble a species belonging to the genus *Calyptomena* only slightly

**Pseudochelidon** *soo-doe-KEL-ih-don*

*Pseudo*, false, and *chelidon*, swallow, as in *Pseudochelidon*  
*eurystomina*, the African River Martin

**Pseudodacnis** *soo-soe-DAK-nis*

*Pseudo*, false, and *dacnis*, unknown Egyptian bird, such as  
*Pseudodacnis* (now *Dacnis*) *bartlaubi*, the Turquoise Dacnis

**Pseudonestor** *soo-doe-NES-tor*

*Pseudo*, false, and *nestor*, referring to some New Zealand parrots,  
as in *Pseudonestor xanthophrys*, the Maui Parrotbill

**Psittacula** *sit-ta-KOO-la*

*Psittacus*, a parrot, and *-ula*, diminutive, as in *Psittacula krameri*,  
the Rose-ringed or Ring-necked Parakeet

**Psittacus** *SIT-ta-kus*

*Psittacus*, a parrot, as in *Psittacus erithacus*, the Gray Parrot

**Psittirostra** *sit-ti-ROSS-tra*

*Psittacus*, parrot, and *rostrum*, beak, as in *Psittirostra psittacea*,  
the extinct Ou

**Psophia** *so-FEE-a*

Greek, *psophos*, noise, as in *Psophia viridis*, the Dark-winged Trumpeter

**Psophodes** *so-FO-deez*

Greek, *psophodes*, noisy, as in *Psophodes nigroregularis*, the Western  
Whipbird; referring to its active, lively, continual singing

**Pteridophora** *ter-ih-do-FOR-a*

Greek, *pteridon*, a fern, and *phoreo*, to bear, as in *Pteridophora alberti*, the  
King of Saxony Bird-of-paradise, with two long feathers on its head



*Pseudocalyptomena graueri*,  
Grauer's Broadbill

**Pterocles** *TER-o-kleez*

Greek, *pteron*, wings, as in *Pterocles coronatus*,  
the Crowned Sandgrouse

**Pterodroma** *ter-o-DROM-a*

Greek, *pteron*, wing, and *dromos*, runner, as in *Pterodroma*  
*inexpectata*, the Mottled Petrel

**Pteroglossus** *ter-o-GLOS-sus*

Greek, *pteron*, wing, and *glossa*, tongue, as in *Pteroglossus viridis*,  
the Green Aracari, which has a long, fringed tongue; Aracari from  
the Brazilian Tupi language

**Pteropodocys** *ter-o-po-DOE-sis*

Greek, *pteron*, wing, and *pous*, foot, as in *Pteropodocys* (now *Coracina*)  
*maxima*, the Ground Cuckooshrike, supposedly nearly as fast on the  
ground as it is in the air

**Pteroptochos** *ter-op-TOE-kos*

Greek, *pteron*, wing, and *ptokhos*, begging, as in *Pteroptochos*  
*castaneus*, the Chestnut-throated Huet-huet, named after the call

**Ptilinopus** *til-in-O-pus*

Greek, *ptilon*, feather, and *pous*, foot, as in *Ptilinopus cinctus*,  
the Banded Fruit Dove, with feather-covered tarsus

**Ptiliogonys** *tili-o-GON-is*

Greek, *ptilon*, feather, and *gonys*, knee, as in *Ptiliogonys cinereus*,  
the Gray Silky-flycatcher, with feather-covered knees

**Ptilonorhynchus** *til-o-no-RINK-us*

Greek, *ptilon*, feather, and Latin, *rhynchus*, beak, as in *Ptilonorhynchus*  
*violaceus*, the Satin Bowerbird, whose bill is partly covered by feathers

**Ptiloprora** *til-o-PRO-ra*

Greek, *ptilon*, feather, and *prora*, front, prow, as in *Ptiloprora erythropleura*, the Rufous-sided Honeyeater

**Ptiloris** *til-OR-is*

Greek, *ptilon*, wing, and *oris*, mouth, as in *Ptiloris magnificus*, the Magnificent Riflebird; the underside and top of the beak is partially feathered

**Ptychoramphus** *ti-ko-RAM-fus*

Greek, *ptyx*, folded, and *rampnos*, beak, as in *Ptychoramphus aleutica*, Cassin's Auklet; the bill looks as if it has been compressed and folded

**Pucherani** *poo-cher-AN-eye*

After Jacques Pucheran, French zoologist, as in *Melanerpes pucherani*, the Black-cheeked Woodpecker

**Pucrasia** *poo-KRAS-ee-a*

Nepalese, *pukras*, as in *Pucrasia macrolopha*, the Koklass Pheasant; both genus and common name derive from its call

**Puffinus** *puf-FINE-us*

Middle English, *poffin*, for the carcasses of Manx Shearwaters (used as food), as in *Puffinus gravis*, the Great Shearwater

**Pulchella**, -us *pul-KEL-la/lus*

Beautiful little, as in *Lacedo pulchella*, the Banded Kingfisher

**Pulcher** *PUL-ker*

Beautiful, as in *Lamprolornis pulcher*, the Chestnut-bellied Starling

**Pulcherrima**, -us *pul-ker-REE-ma/mus*

*Pulcherrimus*, very beautiful, as in *Megalaima pulcherrima*, the Golden-naped Barbet

**Pulchra** *PUL-kra*

*Pulcher*, beautiful, as in *Macgregoria pulchra*, MacGregor's Honeyeater

**Punctatus**, -a, -um *punk-TAT-us/a/um*

*Punctum*, dot, spot, as in *Falco punctatus*, the Mauritius Kestrel, with heavily spotted plumage

**Pusilla**, -lus *poo-SIL-la/lus*

*Pusillus*, very small, as in *Emberiza pusilla*, the Little Bunting

**Pycnonotus** *pik-no-NO-tus*

Greek, *pychnos*, strong, thick, and *notos*, back, as in *Pycnonotus nigricans*, the African Red-eyed Bulbul

*Lacedo pulchella*,  
Banded Kingfisher

**Pycnoptilus** *pik-nop-TIL-us*

Greek, *pychnos*, strong, thick, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Pycnoptilus floccosus*, the Pilotbird, a plump bird, implying thick plumage

**Pygoscelis** *pi-gos-SEL-is*

Greek, *puge*, the rump, and *skelos*, leg, as in *Pygoscelis papua*, the Gentoo Penguin; refers to the thick tail that brushes the ground as if it were a third leg

**Pyriglena** *py-ri-GLEN-a*

Greek, *pyr*, fire, and *glene*, eyeball, as in *Pyriglena atra*, the Fringe-backed Fire-eye

**Pyrocephalus** *pye-ro-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *pyr*, fire, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Pyrocephalus rubinus*, the Vermilion Flycatcher

**Pyrrhula** *pir-ROO-la*

Greek, *pyrrhos*, fire-colored, as in *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, the Eurasian Bullfinch, for the red plumage of the male

**Pyrrhuloxia** *pir-roo-LOKS-ee-a*

Greek, *pyrrhos*, fire-colored, and *loxos*, slanting, crosswise, as in *Pyrrhuloxia* (now *Cardinalis*) *sinuatus*, the Pyrrhuloxia. Its reddish color and compact, heavy curved bill accounts for the name

**Pyrrhura** *pir-ROO-ra*

Greek, *pyrrhos*, fire-colored, as in *Pyrrhura frontalis*, the Maroon-bellied Parakeet

## Q

**Quadragintus** *kwa-dra-JIN-tus*

Forty, as in *Pardalotus quadragintus*, the Forty-spotted Pardalote

**Quadribrachys** *kwa-dri-BRAK-is*

*Quadri-*, four, and *brachium*, arm, as in *Alcedo quadribrachys*, the Shining-blue Kingfisher; actually means four toes

**Quadricinctus** *kwa-dri-SINK-tus*

*Quadri-*, four, and *cinctus*, surround, encircle, as in *Pterocles quadricinctus*, the Four-banded Sandgrouse (see box)

**Quadricolor** *kwa-dri-KO-lor*

*Quadri-*, four, and *color*, color in appearance, as in *Dicaeum quadricolor*, the Cebu Flowerpecker

**Quelea** *KWEL-lee-a*

After an African native name, as in *Quelea quelea*, the Red-billed Quelea

**Querquedula** *kwer-kweh-DOO-la*

Kind of duck that makes a sound like querquedula, as in *Anas querquedula*, the Garganey, which derives from the Latin *gargala*, tracheal artery

**Quinticolor** *kwin-ti-KO-lor*

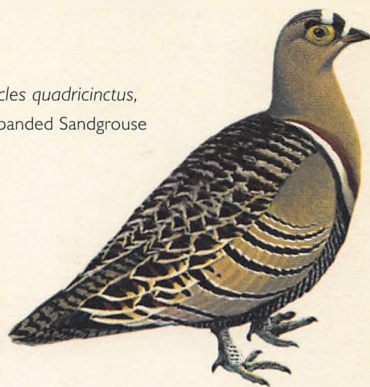
*Quint-*, five, and *color*, visible color, as in *Capito quinticolor*, the Five-colored Barbet



## LATIN IN ACTION

The Four-banded (*quadricinctus*) Sandgrouse inhabits the central region of Africa, from east to west, in open, savanna-like habitats. The male is larger and more colorful, but both sexes are cryptically colored to blend into the background. The bands on the chest and abdomen of the strongly marked male camouflage the bird as they break up its outline; this is called "disruptive coloration," and is often found on ground-dwelling birds. The male has specially constructed feathers (unique to species of sandgrouse) on its belly that absorb water so that it can carry water to his chicks from distant waterholes.

*Pterocles quadricinctus*,  
Four-banded Sandgrouse

**Quiscalus**, -a *kwis-KAL-us/a*

*Quis*, who, and *qualis*, of what kind, as in *Quiscalus quiscula*, the Common Grackle

**Quitensis** *kwin-TEN-sis*

After Quito, Ecuador, as in *Grallaria quitensis*, the Tawny Antpitta

**Quoyi** *KWOY-eye*

After Jean Quoy, French naturalist, as in *Cracticus quoyi*, the Black Butcherbird

*Capito quinticolor*,  
Five-colored Barbet



# ALEXANDER F. SKUTCH

(1904–2004)

Born near Baltimore, Maryland, in 1904, Alexander Skutch began developing his passion for nature when his family moved to a farm in the country. He went on to study botany, receiving a doctorate degree from John Hopkins University in 1928. After graduation he sailed from New York to Panama to study banana diseases, but quickly became fascinated by the birds of the New World Tropics, as they nested all over his primitive field station.

While Skutch pursued his botanical work in Honduras, Guatemala, and Costa Rica, his interest in ornithology continued to grow. He financed his bird-watching studies by collecting tropical plants for museums in America and Europe, spending several seasons in the forests and mountains of Guatemala, Honduras, and Costa Rica. He found a perfect bird study location in a remote forested valley near San Isidro del General in Costa Rica. In 1941 he bought 178 acres of land and built a house there, naming it *Finca Los Cusingos* after the local name for the Fiery-billed Aracari, *Pteroglossus frantzii*, a relative of the toucan.



A lifelong vegetarian, Skutch grew corn, yucca, and other crops, and, without running water until the 1990s, bathed and drank from the nearest stream. He believed in “treading lightly on the mother Earth,” and his longevity demonstrates that he thrived on this simple lifestyle. He married Pamela Lankester, daughter of the English naturalist Sir Charles Lankester, in 1950, and with their adopted son Edwin, stayed at *Finca Los Cusingos* for the rest of his life, although his pristine forest became an island in the middle of banana and coffee plantations.

He was a prolific naturalist/writer, publishing over 40 books, mostly about birds but also on environmental philosophy. In 1983 he produced *Birds of Tropical America*, and with Gary Stiles he wrote *The Birds of Costa Rica* (1989), one of the first field guides to a tropical country. He chronicled his life in detail in books like *The Imperative Call* (1993), about his early adventures in Maryland, Jamaica,

*Trogon collaris*,  
Collared Trogon

The Collared Trogon was one of the spectacular birds that convinced Skutch to abandon his study of bananas and concentrate on birds.

“For a large and growing number of people, birds are the strongest bond with the living world of nature. They charm us with lovely plumage and melodious songs; our quest of them takes us to the fairest places; to find them and uncover some of their well-guarded secrets we exert ourselves greatly and live intensely.”

—Alexander F. Skutch (from “The Appreciative Mind,” the epilogue to

A Bird Watcher’s Adventures in Tropical America)

and Guatemala, and *A Naturalist in Costa Rica* (1971), perhaps his most-read book. Other subjects included his views on evolution (*Life Ascending*, 1985), and on religion (*The Quest of the Divine*, 1956). His last book, *Harmony and Conflict in the Living World* (2000), advocating a more peaceful co-existence with wildlife, was influenced by changes he witnessed around his forest home as industrial farming developed.

In addition to his many books, Skutch made innumerable contributions to journals and magazines, publishing nearly 200 papers. Roger Tory Peterson believed that Skutch's detailed life histories of Central American birds did for neotropical birds what Audubon's paintings did for the birds of North America.

He disliked statistics, preferring close observation and interpretation for his bird studies. Believing that



*Chamaepetes unicolor*,  
Black Guan

Visitors to the Alexander Skutch Los Cusingos Bird Sanctuary, situated on a property purchased by him in 1941, might see a Black Guan.

even banding or ringing birds was wrong, he recognized individual birds on his estate by small differences in their plumage and behavior. Skutch thought that the minds of birds were revealed in the way they lived, behaviors that showed them to be "not unfeeling automata, but sensitive creatures aware of what they do."

His important discovery of "cooperative breeding" in Brown Jays, *Psilorhinus morio*, led to a lifelong interest in the ways birds help one another, especially in parenting and nest-building. He showed a clear preference for birds that got along with other birds, occasionally shooting at hawks when they threatened his preferred species. In 1987 he published *Helpers at Birds' Nests: A Worldwide Survey of Cooperative Breeding and Related Behavior*.

The Pamela and Alexander Skutch Research Award for studies in avian natural history was established in 1997 by the Association of Field Ornithologists and funded by an endowment from Skutch himself. In 2004, a few days before he died at 99, Skutch received the Loye and Alden Miller Research Award from the Cooper Ornithological Society for lifetime achievement in ornithological research.

*Psilorhinus morio*,  
Brown Jay

The Brown Jay of Central America has two color phases: In the north part of their range they are dark brown on top and lighter underneath, while in the south the population has a white belly.



## R

**Rabori** *ra-BOR-eye*

After Dioscoro Rabor, a Filipino ornithologist, as in *Napothera* (now *Robsonius*) *rabori*, Cordillera Ground Warbler

**Radiceus** *ra-DIS-ee-us*

Rayed or striped, as in *Carpococcyx radiceus*, the Bornean Ground Cuckoo, with stripes on its underside

**Rafflesii** *RAF-fulz-ee-eye*

After Thomas Raffles, Lieutenant Governor of Java, as in *Dinopium rafflesii*, the Olive-backed Woodpecker

**Raimondii** *rye-MOND-ee-eye*

After Antonio Raimondi, an Italian-born Peruvian geographer and scientist, as in *Sicalis raimondii*, Raimondi's Yellow Finch

**Rallicula** *ral-li-KOO-la*

*Rale*, rail, and *-culus*, diminutive, as in *Rallicula rubra*, the Chestnut Forest Rail

**Rallina** *ral-LEEN-a*

*Rale*, rail, and diminutive, *-ina*, as in *Rallina rubra*, the Chestnut Forest Crake

**Rallus** *RAL-lus*

*Rale*, rail, and diminutive, *-ina*, as in *Rallina tricolor*, the Red-necked Crake

*Ramphotrigon megacephalum*,  
Large-headed Flatbill

**Ramphastos** *ram-FASS-tos*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *-astus*, augmentative, as in *Ramphastos sulfuratus*, the Keel-billed Toucan

**Ramphocaenus** *ram-fo-SEE-nus*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *caen-*, new, fresh, as in *Ramphocaenus melanurus*, the Long-billed Gnatwren

**Ramphocelus** *ram-fo-SEL-us*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *kelas*, spot, as in *Ramphocelus nigrogularis*, the Masked Crimson Tanager

**Ramphocinclus** *ram-fo-SINK-lus*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *cinclus*, thrush, as in *Ramphocinclus brachyurus*, the White-breasted Thrasher

**Ramphocoris** *ram-fo-KOR-is*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *corys*, helmet, as in *Ramphocoris clotbey*, the Thick-billed Lark

**Ramphodon** *ram-FO-don*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *odon*, tooth, as in *Ramphodon naevius*, the Saw-billed Hermit

**Ramphomicron** *ram-fo-MY-kron*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *mikron*, small, as in *Ramphomicron dorsale*, the Black-backed Thornbill

**Ramphotrigon** *ram-fo-TRY-gon*

Greek, *rhampbos*, beak, and *trigon*, triangle, as in *Ramphotrigon megacephalum*, the Large-headed Flatbill, with the typical triangular bill of flycatchers

**Ramsayi** *RAM-zee-eye*

After Robert Ramsay, a British ornithologist, as in *Actinodura ramsayi*, the Spectacled Barwing

**Randi** *RAND-eye*

After Austen Rand, American ornithologist, as in *Muscicapa randi*, the Ashy-breasted Flycatcher

**Randia** *RAND-ee-a*

After Austen Rand, American ornithologist, as in *Randia pseudozosterops*, Rand's Warbler

**Raphus** *RAY-fus*

*Raphus* was the name assigned to bustards in 1760. Galenus, a Roman physician, named the Dodo *Raphus cucullatus*, referring to a bustard



## Rara *RAR-a*

Rare, as in *Phytotoma rara*, the Rufous-tailed Plantcutter

## Rectirostris *rek-ti-ROSS-tris*

*Recti-*, straight, and *rostra*, bill, as in *Limnactites rectirostris*, the Straight-billed Reedhaunter

## Recurvirostra, -is *re-kur-vi-ROSS-tra/tris*

*Recurvus*, bent back, and *rostra*, bill, as in *Recurvirostra andina*, the Andean Avocet with an upcurved bill (see box)

## Redivivum *re-di-VEE-um*

Revived, as in *Toxostoma redivivum*, the California Thrasher. Name refers to the fact that the bird was described, then "lost" and found again by another ornithologist

## Reevei *REEVE-eye*

After J. P. Reeve, an American collector, as in *Turdus reevei*, the Plumbeous-backed Thrush

## Reevesii *REEV-zee-eye*

After John Reeves, English naturalist and collector, as in *Syrnaticus reevesii*, Reeves's Pheasant

## Regalis *re-GAL-is*

Regal, king, as in *Buteo regalis*, the Ferruginous Hawk

## Regia, -us *RE-jee-a/us*

Royal, as in *Vidua regia*, the Shaft-tailed Whydah, probably because of the regal appearance of the male with a black crown and very long tail feathers

## Regulorum *re-goo-LOR-um*

Royal, kingly, as in *Balearica regulorum*, the Gray Crowned Crane

## Regulus, -oides *re-GOO-lus/re-goo-LOY-deez*

Diminutive of *rex*, little king or prince, as in *Regulus regulus*, the Goldcrest

## Reichardi *RYE-cart-eye*

After Paul Reichard, German geographer and engineer, as in *Criuhagra reichardi*, Reichard's Seedcater

## Reichenbachii *RIKE-en-bak-ee-eye*

After Henrich Reichenbach, a German zoologist and botanist, as in *Anabathmis reichenbachii*, Reichenbach's Sunbird

## Reichenowi *RIKE-ken-oh-eye*

After Anton Reichenow, German ornithologist, as in *Streptopelia reichenowi*, the White-winged Collared Dove

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

Shorebird species have a variety of bill shapes and lengths so that they can exploit different food sources in their shoreline habitat. The recurved bill of the avocet is long and curves upward along its distal half. To catch its insect and invertebrate prey, the avocet sweeps its bill from side to side on the surface of the water. Avocet may come from the black and white outfits worn by European lawyers but the real etymology is unclear.

*Recurvirostra andina*,  
Andean Avocet



## Reinwardtii *rine-VART-ee-eye*

After Caspar Reinwardt, Dutch ornithologist, as in *Apalharpactes reinwardtii*, the Javan Trogon

## Reiseri *RYE-zer-eye*

After Othmar Reiser, Australian collector, as in *Phyllomyias reiseri*, Reiser's Tyrannulet

## Religiosa *re-li-jee-OS-a*

Religious, sacred, revered, as in *Gracula religiosa*, the Common Hill Myna, which helps to propagate the Banyan Tree, sacred to Hindus

## Remiz *RE-miz*

Polish for tit, as in *Remiz pendulinus*, the Eurasian Penduline Tit

## Reticulata *re-ti-koo-LAT-a*

Reticulated, covered with ridges or grooves, as in *Meliphaga reticulata*, the Streak-breasted Honeyeater

## Rex *REKS*

King, as in *Balaeniceps rex*, the Shoebill

## Rhabdornis *rab-DOR-nis*

Greek, *rhabdotos*, striped, as in *Rhabdornis mystacalis*, the Stripe-headed Rhabdornis

## Rhagologus *rag-o-LO-gus*

Greek, *rhago*, grape, berry, and *logas*, picked, chosen, as in *Rhagologus leucostigma*, the Mottled Whistler, which eats berries

## Rhamphomantis *ram-fo-MAN-tis*

Greek, *rhampfos*, bill, and *mantis*, soothsayer, as in *Rhamphomantis* (now *Chrysococcyx*) *megarhynchus*, the Long-billed Cuckoo

## Rhea *REE-a*

After a mythological Greek figure Rhea, the daughter of the sky god Uranus, as in *Rhea americana*, the Greater Rhea

## Rheinardia *rine-AR-dee-a*

After Pierre-Paul Rheinhard, French Army officer, as in *Rheinardia ocellata*, the Crested Argus

## Rhinocrypta *rine-o-KRIP-ta*

Greek, *rhinos*, nose, and *crypta*, hidden, as in *Rhinocrypta lanceolata*, the Crested Gallito; the nostrils are hidden by a bill plate

*Rhinoptilus africanus*,  
Double-banded Courser



*Rhodinocichla rosea*,  
Rosy Thrush-Tanager

## Rhinomyias *rine-o-MY-ee-as*

Greek, *rhinos*, nose, and *myia*, fly, as in *Rhinomyias insignis*, the White-browed Jungle Flycatcher

## Rhinopomastus *rine-o-po-MAS-tus*

Greek, *rhinos*, nose, and *pomos*, cover, as in *Rhinopomastus minor*, the Abyssinian Scimitarbill

## Rhinoptilus *rine-op-TIL-us*

Greek, *rhinos*, nose, and *ptilon*, feather, as in *Rhinoptilus africanus*, the Double-banded Courser

## Rhipidura, -us *rip-ib-DOO-ra/rus*

Greek, *rhipis*, a fan, and *oura*, tail, as in *Rhipidura nebulosa*, the Samoan Fantail

## Rhizothera *rise-o-THER-a*

Greek, *rhiza*, root, and *thera*, hunting, pursuit, as in *Rhizothera longirostris*, the Long-billed Partridge

## Rhodacanthis *ro-da-KAN-thiss*

Greek, *rhodon*, rose, and *akanthis*, finch, goldfinch, as in *Rhodacanthis flaviceps*, the extinct Lesser Koa Finch

## Rhodinocichla *ro-di-no-SIK-la*

Greek, *rhodon*, rose, and *cichla*, thrush, as in *Rhodinocichla rosea*, the Rosy Thrush-Tanager

## Rhodonessa *ro-doe-NES-sa*

Greek, *rhodon*, rose, and *nessa*, duck, as in *Rhodonessa caryophyllacea*, the probably extinct Pink-headed Duck

## Rhodopechys *ro-doe-PEK-is*

Greek, *rhodon*, rose, and *pechys*, forearm, as in *Rhodopechys sanguineus*, the Eurasian Crimson-winged Finch

**Rhodophoneus** *ro-doe-FONE-ee-us*

Greek, *rhodon*, rose, and *phoneus*, a murderer, as in *Rhodophoneus* (now *Telophorus*) *cruentus*, the Rosy-patched Bushshrike

**Rhodospiza** *ro-doe-SPY-za*

Greek, *rhodon*, rose, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Rhodospiza obsoleta*, the Desert Finch, with pink patches on the wings

**Rhodostethia** *ro-doe-STETH-ee-a*

Greek, *rhodon*, rose, and *stethos*, breast, as in *Rhodostethia rosea*, Ross's Gull, with a rosy wash to the underparts, after British Rear Admiral James Ross who discovered the Ross Sea and Ross Ice Shelf

**Rhopocichla** *ro-po-SIK-la*

Greek, *rhopo*, bushes, brush, and *cichla*, thrush, as in *Rhopocichla atriceps*, the Dark-fronted Babbler

**Rhopophilus** *ro-po-FIL-us*

Greek, *rhopo*, bushes, brush, and *philos*, love, like, as in *Rhopophilus pekinensis*, the Chinese Hill Warbler

**Rhopornis** *ro-POR-nis*

Greek, *rhopo*, bushes, brush, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Rhopornis ardesiacus*, the Slender Antbird

**Rhyacornis** *ry-a-KOR-nis*

Greek, *rhya*, stream, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Rhyacornis bicolor*, the Luzon Water Redstart

**Rhynchophanes** *rin-ko-FAN-eez*

Greek, *rhynchos*, beak, and *phaino*, to appear, as in *Rhynchophanes mccownii*, McCown's Longspur

**Rhynchopsitta** *rin-kop-SIT-ta*

Greek, *rhynchos*, beak, and *psitta*, parrot, as in *Rhynchopsitta pachyrhyncha*, the Thick-billed Parrot

**Rhynchortyx** *rin-KOR-tiks*

Greek, *rhynchos*, beak, and *ortyx*, quail, as in *Rhynchortyx cinctus*, the Tawny-faced Quail

**Rhynchotus** *rin-KO-tus*

Greek, *rhunkhos*, beak, and *otus*, ear, as in *Rhynchotus rufescens*, the Red-winged Tinamou

**Rhynchoetos** *rine-o-KET-os*

Greek, *rhinos*, nose, and *chetos*, corn (referring to corn-shaped flaps over the nostrils) as in *Rhynchoetos jubatus*, the Kagu, a local native name



*Rhopophilus pekinensis*,  
Chinese Hill Warbler

**Richardi** *rich-ARD-eye*

After Richard of Luneville, French naturalist and collector, as in *Anthus richardi*, Richard's Pipit

**Richardsii** *RICH-ards-ee-eye*

After George Richards, British Rear-Admiral and geographer, as in *Ptilinopus richardsii*, the Silver-capped Fruit Dove

**Ridgwayi** *RIJ-way-eye*

After Robert Ridgway, American zoologist and curator, as in *Anrostomus ridgwayi*, the Buff-collared Nightjar

**Ridibundus** *ri-di-BUN-dus*

*Ridere*, to laugh, as in *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*, the Black-headed Gull, after the bird's call

**Riparia** *ri-PAR-ee-a*

*Ripa*, stream bank, as in *Riparia cincta*, the Banded Martin, which nests in sandbanks



**Risoria** *ri-SOR-ee-a*

*Risor*, one who mocks, as in *Streptopelia risoria* (now *roseogrisea*), the Barbary or African Collared Dove, referring to the bird's call

**Rissa** *RIS-sa*

From Icelandic *rita*, kittiwake, as in *Rissa tridactyla*, the Black-legged Kittiwake

**Robertsii** *ROB-erts-eye*

After J. Austin Roberts, South African zoologist, as in *Oreophilais robertsii*, the Roberts's or Briar Warbler

**Robinsoni** *ro-bin-SON-eye*

After Herbert Robinson, British ornithologist and zoologist, as in *Myiophonus robinsoni*, the Malayan Whistling Thrush

**Robusta**, -us *ro-BUST-a/us*

*Robustus*, of oak, hard, firm, as in *Gracula robusta*, the Nias Hill Myna, a stocky bird

**Roraimae**, -ia *ro-RIME-ee/ee-a*

After Mt. Roraima, Guyana and Venezuela, as in *Megascops roraimae*, the Roraiman Screech Owl

**Rosea**, -ata, -tus *rose-EE-a/rose-ee-AH-ta/tus*

*Roseus*, rose-colored, as in *Rhodostethia rosea*, Ross's Gull, with a pink wash to the underparts

**Roseicapilla** *rose-ee-eye-ka-PIL-la*

*Roseus*, rose-colored, and *capilla*, hair, as in *Ptilinopus roseicapilla*, the Mariana Fruit Dove

**Roseicollis** *rose-ee-eye-KOL-lis*

*Roseus*, rose-colored, and *colli*-, neck, as in *Agapornis roseicollis*, the Rosy-faced Lovebird

**Roseifrons** *rose-ee-EYE-fronz*

*Roseus*, rose-colored, and *frons*, forehead, as in *Pyrhura roseifrons*, the Rose-fronted Parakeet

**Roseigaster** *rose-ee-eye-GAS-ter*

*Roseus*, rose-colored, and *gaster*, belly, as in *Priotelus roseigaster*, the Hispaniolan Trogon

**Rosenbergi** *RO-sen-berg-eye*

After Carl von Rosenberg, German naturalist and geographer, as in *Tyto rosenbergi*, the Sulawesi Masked Owl



*Piranga roseogularis*,  
Rose-throated Tanager

**Roseogrisea** *rose-ee-a-GRISS-ee-a*

*Roseus*, rose-colored, and *grise*, gray, as in *Streptopelia roseogrisea*, the African Collared Dove

**Roseogularis** *rose-ee-o-goo-LAR-is*

*Roseus*, rose-colored, and *gula*, throat, as in *Piranga roseogularis*, the Rose-throated Tanager

**Roseus** *RO-zee-us*

Rose-colored, as in *Pastor roseus*, the Rosy Starling

**Rossii** *ROSS-ee-eye*

After Bernard Ross, Irish trader and administrator, as in *Chen rossii*, Ross's Goose

**Rostratula**, -us *ros-tra-TOO-la/lus*

*Rostrum*, beak, and -*atus*, with, as in *Rostratula australis*, the Australian Painted-snipe

**Rostrhamus** *ros-ter-HAM-us*

*Rostrum*, beak, and *hamus*, hook, as in *Rostrhamus sociabilis*, the Snail Kite, with a hooked beak

**Rothschildi** *ROTHS-child-eye*

After Lionel Walter Rothschild, founder of the Natural History Museum, Tring, England, as in *Leucopsar rothschildi*, the Bali Myna

**Rubecula** *roo-be-KOO-la*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, as in *Erithacus rubecula*, the European Robin

**Ruber** *ROO-ber*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, as in *Eudocimus ruber*, the Scarlet Ibis

**Rubescens** *roo-BES-sens*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, going to red, as in *Agrapospiza rubescens*, Blanford's Rosefinch or the Crimson Rosefinch

**Rubiginosus** *roo-bi-ji-NO-sus*

Reddish or rusty, as in *Colaptes rubiginosus*, the Golden-olive Woodpecker

**Rubinus** *roo-BYE-nus*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, as in *Pyrocephalus rubinus*, the Vermilion Flycatcher

**Rubra** *ROO-bra*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, as in *Paradisaea rubra*, the Red Bird-of-paradise

**Rubricauda** *roo-bri-KAW-da*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Phaethon rubricauda*, the Red-tailed Tropicbird

**Rubriceps** *ROO-bri-seps*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, and *ceps*, head, as in *Anaplectes rubriceps*, the Red-headed Weaver (see box)

**Rubricollis** *roo-bri-KOL-lis*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, and *collis*, neck, as in *Malimbus rubricollis*, the Red-headed Malimb

**Rubrifrons** *ROO-bri-fronz*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, and *frons*, front, forehead, as in *Cardellina rubrifrons*, the Red-faced Warbler

**Rubripes** *roo-BRI-peeZ*

*Rubi*, red, reddish, and *pes*, foot, as in *Anas rubripes*, the American Black Duck

**Rueppeli** *roo-PEL-eye*

After Wilhelm Rüppell, a German collector, as in *Sylvia rueppeli*, Rüppell's Warbler

**Rufa** *ROO-fa*

Red, rufous, as in *Lessonia rufa*, the Austral Negrilo

**Rufescens** *roo-FES-sens*

Reddish, as in *Atrichornis rufescens*, the Rufous Scrubbird

## LATIN IN ACTION

*Anaplectes* comes from *Anapleko*, Greek for weave or braid, and lucidly describes the weaver birds or weaver finches of the family Plocidae, from the Greek *ploke*, a twining or weaving. And weave they do, constructing the most complex nests of any birds. Found mainly in sub-saharan Africa, the size, shape, and construction materials of the nests varies from species to species. The Red-headed Weaver (*Anaplectes rubriceps*) inhabits a wide area in southeastern Africa and exhibits a variety of plumage patterns, which have prompted ornithologists to assign it different scientific names over the years.

It was originally designated *Ploceus melanotis* (Black-eared Weaver) in 1839 even though some populations do not have black ear markings. In 1845 it became *Ploceus erythrocephalus* (Red-headed Weaver) but not until 1954 did *Anaplectes rubriceps* become the accepted name. Recent DNA evidence seems to indicate, however, the Red-headed Weaver is related to the *Ploceus* genus and should be *Ploceus rubriceps*. After almost 200 years, the name of this species is still being rethought.

*Anaplectes rubriceps*,  
Red-headed Weaver



**Ruficapilla, -lus** *roo-fi-ka-PIL-la/lus*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *capilla*, hair, as in *Grallaria ruficapilla*, the Chestnut-crowned Antpitta

**Ruficauda, -us, -atum**

*roo-fi-KAW-da/dus/ roo-fi-kaw-DAT-um*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *cauda*, tail, as in *Galbula ruficauda*, the Rufous-tailed Jacamar

**Ruficeps** *ROO-fi-seps*

*Rufus*, brownish-red and *ceps*, head, as in *Aimophila ruficeps*, the Rufous-crowned Sparrow

**Ruficollis** *roo-fi-COL-lis*

*Rufus*, brownish-red and *collis*, collar, neck, as in *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, the Little Grebe

**Rufifrons** *ROO-fi-fronz*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *frons*, front, forehead, as in *Formicarius rufifrons*, the Rufous-fronted Anthrush

**Rufigula, -aris** *roo-fi-GOO-la/roo-fi-goo-LAR-is*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *gula*, throat, as in *Ficedula rufigula*, the Rufous-throated Flycatcher

**Rufinucha** *roo-fi-NOO-ka*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *nucha*, nape, as in *Atlappetes rufinucha*, the Bolivian Brush Finch

**Rufipectus** *roo-fi-PEK-tus*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *pectus*, breast, as in *Leptopogon rufipectus*, the Rufous-breasted Flycatcher

**Rufipennis** *roo-fi-PEN-nis*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *pennis*, feather, as in *Butastur rufipennis*, the Grasshopper Buzzard

**Rufiventer, -tris** *roo-fi-VEN-ter/tris*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *venter*, belly, abdomen, as in *Tachyphonus rufiventer*, the Yellow-crested Tanager

**Rufivirgata, -us** *roo-fi-vir-GAT-a/us*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *virgata*, striped, as in *Arremonops rufivirgatus*, the Olive Sparrow

*Rupicola peruvianus sanguinolentus*,  
Andean Cock-of-the-rock (subspecies)

**Rufogularis** *roo-fō-goo-LAR-is*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, and *gula*, throat, as in *Alcippe rufogularis*, the Rufous-throated Fulvetta

**Rufum, -us** *ROO-fum/fus*

*Rufus*, brownish-red, as in *Toxostoma rufum*, the Brown Thrasher

**Rupestris** *roo-PES-triss*

Rock dweller, as in *Columba rupestris*, the Hill Pigeon, which nests on cliffs and rock ledges

**Rupicola** *roo-pi-KO-la*

*Rupis*, cliff, and *cola*, inhabitant, as in *Rupicola peruvianus*, the Andean Cock-of-the-rock

**Rustica** *RUSS-ti-ka*

*Rusticus*, rural, country, as in *Hirundo rustica*, the Barn Swallow, which avoids urban areas

**Rusticola, -us** *rus-ti-KOL-a/us*

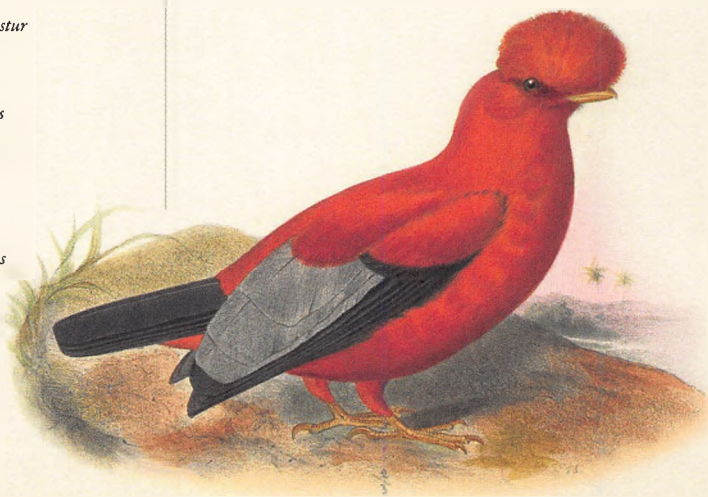
*Rusticus*, rural, country, and *cola*, inhabitant, as in *Scolopax rusticola*, the Eurasian Woodcock

**Ruticilla** *roo-ti-SIL-la*

*Rutis*, reddish, and *cilla*, tail, as in *Setophaga ruticilla*, the American Redstart

**Rynchops** *RIN-kops*

Greek, *rynchas*, beak, and *ops*, face, as in *Rynchops niger*, the Black Skimmer





## S

**Sabini** *SAY-bine-eye*

After Joseph Sabine, English zoologist,  
as in *Rhaphidura sabini*, Sabine's Spinetail

**Sagittarius** *sa-jit-TAR-ee-us*

An archer, as in *Sagittarius serpentarius*, the Secretarybird;  
may refer to the feathers that remind one of an archer's quiver of  
arrows or the way the bird walks, as an archer stalking its prey

**Salmoni** *SAL-mon-eye*

After Thomas Salmon, Colombian engineer, as in *Brachygalba  
salmoni*, the Dusky-backed Jacamar

**Salpinctes** *sal-PINK-teez*

*Salpinx*, trumpet, as in *Salpinctes obsoletus*, the Rock Wren; Ancient  
Greeks compared the song of the Winter Wren to a trumpet and the  
genus name became applied to the North American Rock Wren

**Salpornis** *sal-POR-nis*

Greek, *salpinx*, trumpet, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Salpornis spilonotus*,  
the Indian Spotted Creeper, with a high-pitched call

**Saltator** *sal-TAY-tor*

Leaper, dancer, as in *Saltator maximus*, the Buff-throated  
Saltator; scientific and common name derive from the heavy hopping  
of the birds on the ground

**Salvadorii**, -ia *sal-va-DOR-ee-eye/ee-a*

After Conte Salvadori, Italian physician, educator, and ornithologist,  
as in *Cryptospiza salvadorii*, the Abyssinian Crimsonwing

**Salvini** *SAL-vin-eye*

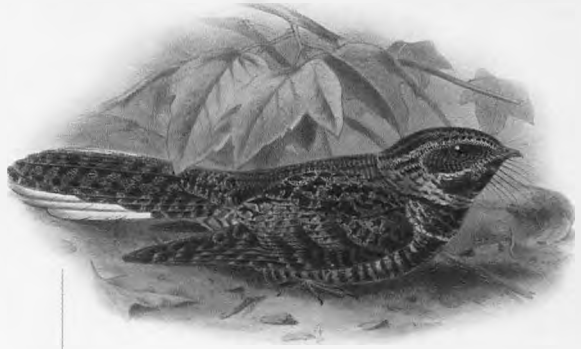
After Osbert Salvin, English naturalist, as in *Anrostomus salvini*,  
the Tawny-collared Nightjar

**Samarensis** *sam-a-REN-sis*

After Samar, Philippines, as in *Orthotomus samarensis*,  
the Yellow-breasted Tailorbird

**Samoensis** *sam-o-EN-sis*

After Samoa, as in *Zosterops samoensis*, the Samoan White-eye



*Anrostomus salvini*,  
Tawny-collared Nightjar

**Sanctithomae** *sank-ti-TO-mee*

After São Tomé, as in *Ploceus sanctithomae*, the São Tomé Weaver

**Sandwichensis**, -vicensis

*sand-wich-EN-sis/sand-vi-SEN-sis*

After the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) as in *Porzana sandwichensis*,  
the extinct Hawaiian Rail

**Sanfordi** *SAN-ford-eye*

After Leyland Sanford, American zoologist, as in *Cyornis sanfordi*,  
the Matinan Blue Flycatcher

**Sanguinea**, -us *san-GWIN-ee-a/us*

*Sanguis*, blood, as in *Cacatua sanguinea*, the Little Corella, with dark  
pink markings around the bill and in front of the eyes

**Sanguiniceps** *san-GWIN-ih-seps*

*Sanguis*, blood, and *ceps*, head, as in *Haematortyx sanguiniceps*,  
the Crimson-headed Partridge. Scientific name literally means  
bloody quail, bloody head

**Sanguinodorsalis** *san-gwin-ob-dor-SAL-is*

*Sanguis*, blood, and *dorsum*, back, as in *Lagonosticta sanguinodorsalis*,  
the Rock Firefinch

**Sarcogyps** *SAR-ko-jips*

Greek, *sarc*, flesh, and *gyps*, vulture, as in *Sarcogyps calvus*,  
the Red-headed Vulture

**Sarcops** *SAR-kops*

Greek, *sarc*, flesh, and *ops*, face, appearance, as in *Sarcops calvus*,  
the Coletto, with an unfeathered head

**Sarcoramphus** *sar-ko-RAM-fus*

Greek, *sarc*, flesh, and *rampnos*, beak, as in *Sarcoramphus papa*, the King Vulture

**Sarkidiornis** *sar-kid-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *sarc*, flesh, *idios*, distinct, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Sarkidiornis melanotos*, the Knob-billed Duck

**Saroglossa** *sar-o-GLOSS-a*

Greek, *saro*, broom, and *glossa*, tongue, as in *Saroglossa* (now *Hartlaubius*) *auratus*, the Madagascan Starling, which has small brushlike spines on its tongue

**Sarothrura** *sar-oth-RUR-a*

Greek, *saro*, broom, and *oura*, tail, as in *Sarothrura ayresi*, the White-winged Flufftail

**Saturata**, -us *sa-tur-AT-a/us*

Saturated, as with color, as in *Euphonia saturata*, the Orange-crowned Euphonia

**Saundersi** *SAWN-ders-eye*

After Howard Saunders, British ornithologist, as in *Chroicocephalus saundersi*, Saunders's Gull

**Saurophagus** *sore-o-FAY-gus*

Greek, *sauro*, lizard, and *phagein*, eat, as in *Todiramphus saurophagus*, the Beach Kingfisher; its diet includes lizards



*Geospiza scandens*,  
Common Cactus Finch

**Savilei** *sa-VIL-eye*

After Robert Savile, British soldier and diplomat, as in *Lophotis savilei*, Savile's Bustard

**Sawtelli** *SAW-tel-lye*

After Gordon Sawtelli, British civil servant, as in *Aerodramus sawtelli*, the Atiu Swiftlet

**Saxicola**, -lina, -oides, *saks-ih-KO-la/*

*saks-ih-ko-LEEN-a/saks-ih-ko-LOY-deez*

*Saxum*, a stone, *colo*, inhabit, as in *Saxicola rubetra*, the Whinchat, common in open rock-strewn habitats

**Sayornis and Saya** *say-OR-nis and SAY-a*

After Thomas Say, American naturalist and zoologist, as in *Sayornis saya*, Say's Phoebe

**Scandens**, -iacus *SKAN-denz/skan-dee-AK-us*

*Scand*-, climbing, as in *Geospiza scandens*, the Common Cactus Finch; probably because they climb around cactus plants to feed on the nectar in their flowers

**Scardafella** *skar-da-FEL-la*

From Dante, to express scaliness, as in *Scardafella* (now *Columbina*) *inca*, the Inca Dove

**Scelorchilus** *skel-or-KIL-us*

Greek, *skelos*, leg, and *orkhilos*, wren, as in *Scelorchilus rubecula*, the Chucao Tapaculo, which resembles a wren

**Scenopoetes** *sken-o-po-EE-teez*

Greek, *skene*, a covered place, and *poietes*, maker, as in *Scenopoetes dentirostris*, the Tooth-billed Bowerbird, which makes a covered bower

**Schalowi** *SHAL-o-eye*

After Herman Schalow, German banker, as in *Tauraco schalowi*, Schalow's Turaco

**Scheepmakeri** *SHEP-mak-er-eye*

After C. Scheepmaker, Dutch civil servant and collector, as in *Goura scheepmakeri*, the Southern Crowned Pigeon

**Schistacea**, -us *shis-TAY-see-a/us*

*Schistus*, slate, as in *Sporophila schistacea*, the Slate-colored Seedeater

**Schisticeps** *SHIS-ti-seps*

*Schistus*, slate, and *-ceps*, head, as in *Coracina schisticeps*, the Gray-headed Cuckooshrike

**Schistochlamys** *shis-to-KLAM-is*

Greek, *schistos*, slate, and *khlamus*, cloak, as in *Schistochlamys ruficapillus*, the Cinnamon Tanager

**Schlegelii** *shlay-GEL-ee-eye*

After Hermann Schlegel, German zoologist, as in *Pachycephala schlegelii*, the Regent Whistler

**Schneideri** *SHNYE-der-eye*

After Gustav Schneider, Swiss zoologist, as in *Hydrornis schneideri*, Schneider's Pitta

**Scissirostrum** *shis-si-ROSS-trum*

*Scissi*, cut, split, and *rostrum*, beak, as in *Scissirostrum dubium*, the Grosbeak Starling, with a powerful bill

**Sclateri**, -a *SKLAY-ter-eye/a*

After Philip or William Sclater, British naturalist, as in *Nonnula sclateri*, the Fulvous-chinned Nunlet

**Sclerurus** *skler-OO-rus*

Greek *skler*, hard, and *oura*, tail, as in *Sclerurus ruficularis*, the Short-billed Leafosser, with a stiff tail

**Scolopaceus** *sko-lo-PACE-ee-us*

Greek, *skolopax*, woodcock, as in *Limnodromus scolopaceus*, the Long-billed Dowitcher, a bird like a woodcock or snipe

**Scolopax** *SKO-lo-paks*

Greek, *skolopax*, woodcock, as in *Scolopax saturata*, the Javan Woodcock

**Scopus** *SKO-pus*

*Scopae*, a broom of twigs, as in *Scopus umbretta*, the Hamerkop, which builds a huge nest of twigs up to 1.5 meters across

**Scotocerca** *sko-toe-SIR-ka*

Greek, *scotos*, darkness, and *cercos*, tail, as in *Scotocerca inquieta*, the Streaked Scrub Warbler, with a tail darker than the rest of its body

**Scotopelia** *sko-toe-PEL-ee-a*

Greek, *scotos*, darkness, and *peleia*, pigeon, as in *Scotopelia bouvieri*, the Vermiculated Fishing Owl (see box); no explanation of pigeon vs owl

**Scutatus**, -a *skoo-TAT-us/a*

*Scutum*, shield, as in *Malimbus scutatus*, the Red-vented Malimbe, which has a bright-red upper chest and throat resembling a shield

## LATIN IN ACTION

The Vermiculated Fishing Owl (*Scotopelia bouvieri*)

is described as a nocturnal dove by its genus.

Nocturnal is appropriate, but dove does not

appear to be. Vermiculated, which means

worm-like, as in wavy lines, might not be the best

descriptor either. The breast of this bird is

streaked with heavy vertical lines; the back and

wings have much more muted but still wavy

markings. Hunting along river edges in central

Africa, it swoops down on fish, frogs, and insects

on the river surface, rarely entering the water even

partially. They feed by sight as the sound of the

river would mask the subtle sounds of their prey.

*Scotopelia bouvieri*,

Vermiculated

Fishing Owl

**Scytalopus** *skit-a-LOP-us*

Greek, *scutale*, thick stick, and *pous*, foot, as in *Scytalopus latrans*, the Blackish Tapaculo; an allusion to the relatively heavy legs and feet

**Seebohmi** *SEE-bome-eye*

After Henry Seebohm, British businessman and amateur ornithologist, as in *Amphilais seebohmi*, the Gray Emutail

**Seicercus** *sy-SIR-kus*

Greek, *sei*, shake, and *cercos*, tail, as in *Seicercus grammiceps*, the Sunda Warbler; presumably named for its tail movements



# Migration

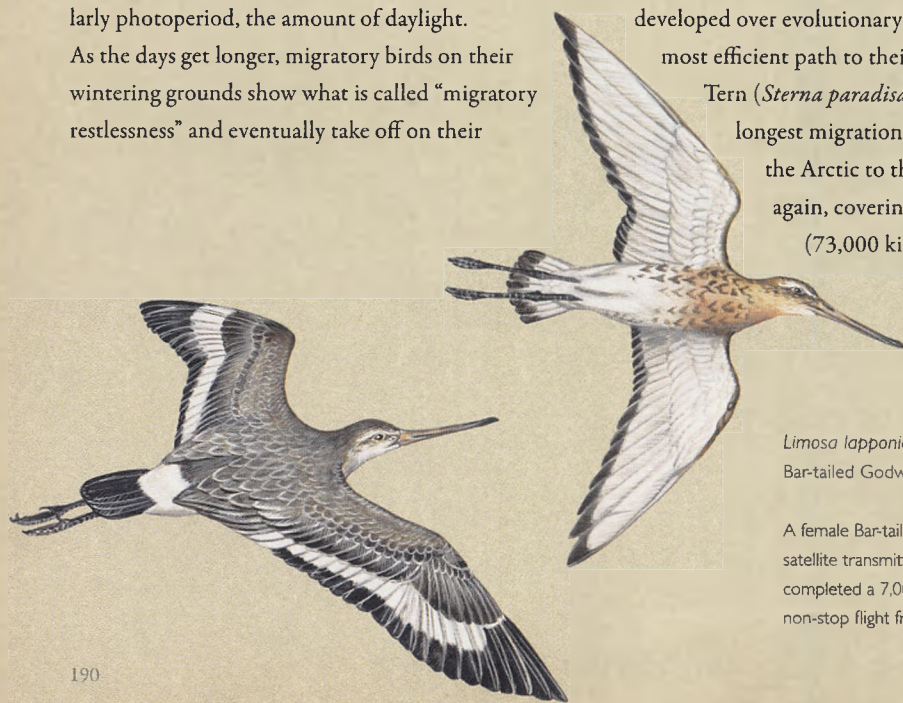
A variety of animals migrate long or short distances from wintering to breeding grounds and back again, or they wander around in search of food, but birds have incorporated these annual movements into their life cycles like almost no other creature. Birds migrate mainly away from nesting sites as cold weather approaches and food supplies decline, and head to warmer wintering areas with abundant fruit, seeds, insects, and other food items. As spring approaches in their breeding grounds, they leave their winter home and migrate back there, now that they have sufficient food, potential mates, and nest sites.

Food and reproduction are the evolutionary (ultimate) reasons for moving to spring breeding grounds; food and escape from winter weather are the ultimate reasons for migrating to warmer wintering grounds. The timing of migration, though, is cued not by weather factors like temperature, but by genetic factors, hormone levels, and particularly photoperiod, the amount of daylight. As the days get longer, migratory birds on their wintering grounds show what is called “migratory restlessness” and eventually take off on their

journey to their breeding grounds (north in the northern hemisphere, the opposite in the southern hemisphere). Conversely, as the days shorten in the breeding areas, the birds reverse the journey. Weather does have some effect on their flights, though. Low pressure with wind and rain may slow the speed of migration, and continued good weather may induce them to stay where they are, at least for a short time.

Instead of migrating across several lines of latitude, some birds simply move down from higher elevations. This is called altitudinal migration. White-ruffed Manakins (*Corapipo altera*) of Central America, for example, migrate to lower elevations during the rainy season to avoid heavy rainstorms.

Birds migrate along flyways (there are eight major ones worldwide) from their breeding to wintering grounds and back. Whether across North America to Central and South America or across Europe to Africa, migrating birds follow general routes that vary with the species and that have developed over evolutionary time to provide the most efficient path to their destination. The Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), the animal with the longest migration, follows coastlines from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back again, covering about 44,000 miles (73,000 kilometers) each year.



*Limosa lapponica*,  
Bar-tailed Godwit

A female Bar-tailed Godwit fitted with a satellite transmitter was found to have completed a 7,000-mile (11,500-kilometer) non-stop flight from Alaska to New Zealand.



*Sterna paradisaea*,  
Arctic Tern

The Arctic Tern has the longest migratory trip of any animal, from the Arctic to the Antarctic and back again every year, over 4,350 miles (70,000 kilometers).

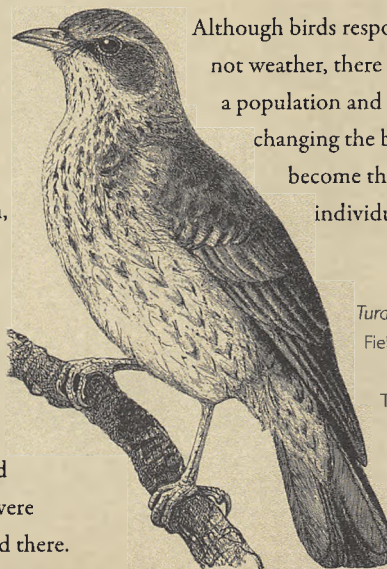
Ornithologists have studied bird migration for over 2,000 years by putting numbered bands or rings on birds and noting where and when they were captured and recaptured. This is called “ringing” in the UK and Europe and “banding” in the US. Of birds that are hunted, like ducks and geese, about 16 percent of the bands are eventually retrieved. With songbirds it is less than 1 percent. More recent techniques involve the use of small transmitters to track birds by radio or microwave telemetry. Radar is also used to follow large flocks of birds from one area to another.

Data have been collected for many years on the dates of migratory arrival and departure each year, and it is clear that many birds have moved their migratory dates earlier due to global warming. Climate change causes flowers, insects, and seeds to appear earlier, and to be the best competitors for

food and mates, birds have to arrive early as well.

Although birds respond to photoperiod and not weather, there is always variability in a population and when conditions are changing the birds that migrate earlier become the most successful individuals.

To find their way from one part of the earth to another, birds need to have some mechanism of navigation. Birds can use landmarks such as lakes, rivers, and mountain ranges, to gauge their path. But landmarks are not the only way. A population of the Bar-tailed Godwit (*Limosa lapponica*) migrates from New Zealand to China, non-stop across the ocean, for 6,000 miles (10,000 kilometers) each year. Birds also use the position of the sun, the moon, and the stars. And recent evidence has shown that birds can detect geomagnetic lines of force via their ophthalmic nerves. Most birds probably use two or more of these mechanisms, but nevertheless they occasionally lose their way or are blown off course by a storm. A number of islands have been colonized this way. A flock of Fieldfares (*Turdus pilaris*) were pushed to Greenland by a storm and naturalized there.



*Turdus pilaris*,  
Fieldfare

The Fieldfare, now a resident of southern Greenland, found its way to the country-island when a group of the birds was blown off course during a migratory flight.



**Seiurus** *see-eye-OO-rus*

Greek, *sei*, shake, and *oura*, tail, as in *Seiurus aurocapilla*, the Ovenbird. While walking it holds its tail high but while resting it slowly moves it up and down

**Selasphorus** *sel-as-FOR-us*

Greek, *selas*, light, and *phoros*, bearing, as in *Selasphorus flammula*, the brightly colored Volcano Hummingbird

**Selenidera** *sel-en-ih-DER-a*

Greek, *selene*, moon, and *dera*, neck, throat, as in *Selenidera maculirostris*, the Spot-billed Toucanet, with crescent-shaped spots on its bill

**Seleucidis** *sel-loy-SID-is*

Greek, *seleukidos*, a locust-eating bird, as in *Seleucidis melanoleucus*, the Twelve-wired Bird-of-paradise

**Semicinerea**, -us *se-mee-sin-AIR-ee-a/us*

*Semi*, half, and *ciner-*, ashy, as in *Cranioloca semicinerea*, the Gray-headed Spinetail

**Semicollaris** *se-mee-col-LAR-is*

*Semi*, half, and *collaris*, neck, collar, as in *Nycticryphes semicollaris*, the South American Painted-snipe

**Semifasciata** *se-mee-fas-see-AT-a*

*Semi*, half, and *fasciat-*, banded, as in *Tityra semifasciata*, the Masked Tityra

**Semifuscus** *se-mee-FUS-kus*

*Semi*, half, and *fusc-*, dusky, as in *Chlorospingus semifuscus*, the Dusky Bush Tanager

**Semipalmatus** *se-mee-pal-MAT-us*

*Semi*, half, and *palmatus*, palm, as in *Charadrius semipalmatus*, the Semipalmated Plover, with partially webbed feet

**Semiplumbeus** *se-mee-PLUM-bee-us*

*Semi*, half, and *plumbeus*, lead (colored), as in *Rallus semiplumbeus*, the Bogota Rail

**Semirufa**, -us *se-mee-ROOF-a/us*

*Semi*, half, and *rufa*, rufus, as in *Cecropis semirufa*, the Red-breasted Swallow

**Semitorquata**, -us *se-mee-tor-KWAT-a/us*

*Semi*, half, and *torquatus*, collared, necklace, as in *Ficedula semitorquata*, the Semicollared Flycatcher

**Semnornis** *sem-NOR-nis*

Greek, *semnos*, fine, great, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Semnornis frantzii*, the Prong-billed Barbet

**Senegala**, -oides, -allus, -ensis

*sen-eh-GAL-a/sen-eh-gal-OY-deez/sen-eh-GAL-lus/sen-eh-gal-EN-sis*

From Senegal, as in *Centropus senegalensis*, the Senegal Coucal

**Sericornis** *se-ri-KOR-nis*

Greek, *serikos*, silken, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Sericornis keri*, the Atherton Scrubwren; presumably from the silky-appearing plumage of their back and head feathers

**Sericulus** *se-ri-KOO-lus*

Greek, *serikos*, silken, and diminutive -culus, as in *Sericulus aureus*, the Masked Bowerbird, with silky plumage

**Serinus** *ser-EYE-nus*

*Serinus*, referring to a bird called the serin, as in *Serinus canaria*, the Atlantic Canary

**Serpophaga** *ser-po-FAY-ga*

Greek, *serphos*, small insect, and *phagein*, to eat, as in *Serpophaga hypoleuca*, the River Tyrannulet

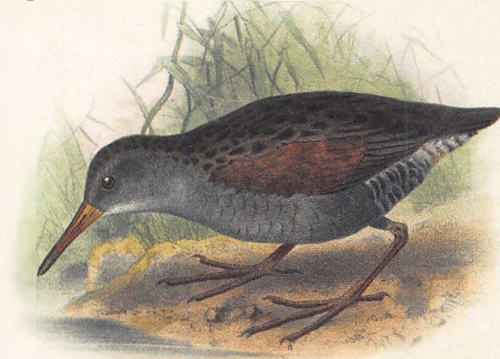
**Serrator** *ser-RA-tor*

*Serra*, saw, as in *Mergus serrator*, the Red-breasted Merganser

**Setophaga** *se-toe-FAY-ga*

Greek, *setos*, insect, and *phagein*, to eat, as in *Setophaga citrina*, the Hooded Warbler

*Rallus semiplumbeus*,  
Bogota Rail







*Sialia currucoides*,  
Mountain Bluebird

### Sewerzowi *su-er-ZO-ey*

After Nikolai Severzov (sic), Russian zoologist, as in *Tetrastes sewerzowi*, the Chinese Grouse

### Sharpei, -ii *SHARP-eye/ee-eye*

After Richard Sharpe, British zoologist, as in *Macronyx sharpei*, Sharpe's Longclaw

### Shelleyi *SHEL-lee-eye*

After George Shelley, British geologist and ornithologist, as in *Nesiocharis shelleyi*, Shelley's Oliveback

### Sialia *see-AL-ee-a*

Greek, *sialis*, a word used by Aristotle to refer to an unidentified bird, as in *Sialia currucoides*, the Mountain Bluebird

### Sibilatrix *si-bi-LA-tricks*

*Sibila*, whistle, as in *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, the Wood Warbler

### Sieboldii *see-BOLD-ee-eye*

After Philip von Siebold, German physician and naturalist, as in *Treron sieboldii*, the White-bellied Green Pigeon

### Signatus *sig-NA-tus*

*Signare*, mark, stamp, designate, as in *Knipolegus signatus*, the Andean Tyrant; perhaps due to the distinctive wing whirring sound the male makes during courtship

### Similis *si-MIL-is*

Like, as in *Anthus similis*, the Long-billed Pipit, with a number of similar-looking geographic races

### Simplex *SIM-pleks*

Simple, as in *Piculus simplex*, the Rufous-winged Woodpecker

### Sinaloa, -ae *sin-a-LOW-a/ee*

After Sinaloa, Mexico, as in *Thryophilus sinaloa*, the Sinaloa Wren

### Sinensis *si-NEN-sis*

Referring to China, Chinese, as in *Sturnia sinensis*, the White-shouldered Starling

### Sitta *SIT-ta*

Greek, *sitte*, a kind of woodpecker or prober, as in *Sitta castanea*, the Indian Nuthatch, which climbs trees like a woodpecker

### Sittasomus *sit-ta-SO-mus*

Greek, *sitte*, a kind of woodpecker or prober, and *soma*, body as in *Sittasomus griseicapillus*, the Olivaceous Woodcreeper

### Sittiparus *sit-ti-PAR-us*

Greek, *sitte*, a kind of woodpecker or prober, and *parus*, tit, as in *Sittiparus varius*, the Varied Tit, which probes for insects and seeds

### Smicrornis *smik-ROR-nis*

Greek, *smikros*, small, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Smicrornis brevirostris*, the Weebill

### Solitaria, -us, -ius *sol-ih-TAR-ee-a/ us/ee-us*

Solitary, as in *Tringa solitaria*, the Solitary Sandpiper, which tends not to be found in large groups

### Somateria *so-ma-TAIR-ee-a*

Greek, *soma*, body, and *erion*, down, as in *Somateria mollissima*, the Common Eider; its soft body down is used in quilts

### Sordida, -us, -ulus *sor-DI-da/dus/sor-di-DOO-lus*

Dirty, unkempt, as in *Pinarochroa sordida*, the Moorland Chat

### Spatula *spat-OO-la*

Spoon, as in *Spatula* (now *Anas*) *clypeata*, the Northern Shoveler, with a wide and flat bill

*Somateria mollissima*,  
Common Eider



**Speciosa** *spe-see-O-sa*

Species, beautiful, as in *Dasyerotapha speciosa*, the Flame-templed Babbler

**Spectabilis** *spek-TA-bil-is*

Fancy, showy, as in *Somateria spectabilis*, the King Eider

**Speirops** *SPY-rops*

Greek, *speira*, wound around, and *ops*, eye, as in *Speirops* (now *Zosterops*) *lugubris*, the Black-capped Speirops; name refers to the bird's white eye ring

**Spelaeornis** *spel-ee-OR-nis*

Greek, *speos*, cave, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Spelaeornis caudatus*, the Rufous-throated Wren-Babbler, which builds its nest in very thick brush, as if in a cave

**Speotyto** *spee-o-TI-to*

Greek, *speos*, cave, and *tyto*, owl, as in *Speotyto* (now *Athene*) *cunicularia*, the Burrowing Owl

**Spermestes** *sper-MESS-teez*

Greek, *sperma*, seed, and Latin *estes*, eating, as in *Spermestes* (now *Lonchura*) *cucullata*, the Bronze Mannikin

**Spermophaga** *sper-mo-FAY-ga*

Greek, *sperma*, seed, and *phagein*, eating, as in *Spermophaga haematina*, the Western Bluebill

**Spheniscus** *sfen-ISS-kus*

Greek, *sphen*, a wedge, and *-icus*, diminutive, as in *Spheniscus humboldti*, the Humboldt Penguin, after its flipper-like wings

**Sphenocichla** *sfen-o-SIK-la*

Greek, *sphen*, a wedge, and Latin, *cichla*, a thrush, as in *Sphenocichla roberti*, the Cachar Wedge-billed Babbler

**Sphecotheres**

*sfee-ko-THER-eez*

Greek, *sphex*, a wasp, and *therao*, hunt, as in *Sphecotheres viridis*, the Green Figbird, which eats insects and occasionally wasps

**Sphyrapicus**

*spy-RAP-ih-kus*

Greek, *sphyra*, hammer, and Latin, *picus*, woodpecker, as in *Sphyrapicus nuchalis*, the Red-naped Sapsucker

**Spilocephalus** *spil-o-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *spilos*, spot, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Otus spilocephalus*, the Mountain Scops Owl; the top of its head is spotted

**Spilodera** *spil-o-DARE-a*

Greek, *spilos*, spot, and *der*, neck, hide, as in *Petrochelidon spilodera*, the South African Cliff Swallow

**Spilogaster** *spil-o-GAS-ter*

Greek, *spilos*, spot, and *gaster*, belly, as in *Aquila spilogaster*, the African Hawk-Eagle

**Silonotus** *spil-o-NO-tus*

Greek, *spilos*, spot, and *noto*, back, as in *Circus silonotus*, the Eastern Marsh Harrier, with a spotted back

**Spilornis** *spil-OR-nis*

Greek, *spilos*, spot, and *ornis*, a bird, as in *Spilornis cheela*, the Crested Serpent Eagle, with a spotted underside

**Spinus** *SPINE-us*

Greek, *spinos*, linner or siskin, as in *Spinus spinus*, the Eurasian Siskin

**Spixii** *SPIKS-ee-eye*

After Johann Von Spix, German naturalist, as in *Cyanopsitta spixii*, Spix's Macaw

**Spiza** *SPY-za*

Greek, *spiza*, finch, as in *Spiza americana*, the Dickcissel, common name from their call

**Spizaetus** *spy-ZEE-tus*

Greek, *spizias*, hawk, and *aetos*, eagle, as in *Spizaetus ornatus*, the Ornate Hawk-Eagle; birds of this genus are intermediate in size between hawks and eagles

**Spizella** *spy-ZEL-la*

Greek, *spiza*, finch, and Latin, *-ella*, diminutive, as in *Spizella passerina*, the Chipping Sparrow

**Sporophila** *spo-ro-FIL-a*

Greek, *sporos*, seed, and *philos*, loving, as in *Sporophila frontalis*, the Buffy-fronted Seedeater

**Squamata, -tus** *skwa-MA-ta/-tus*

*Squamatus*, scaled, as in *Eos squamata*, the Violet-necked Lory

*Spiza americana*,  
Dickcissel



**Squatarola** *skwa-ta-RO-la*

A type of plover, as in *Pluvialis squatarola*, the Gray Plover

**Stachyris** *sta-KIR-is*

Greek, *stachys*, head of grain, and *rhis*, nose, as in *Stachyris grammiceps*, the White-breasted Babbler, referring to the flap of tissue nearly covering the nares (nostrils)

**Steatornis** *stee-a-TOR-nis*

Greek, *steatos*, fat, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Steatornis caripensis*, the Oilbird

**Steerii** *STEER-ee-eye*

After Joseph Steere, American ornithologist, as in *Sarcophanops steerii*, the Wattled Broadbill (see box)

**Stelgidopteryx** *stel-ji-DOP-ter-iks*

Greek, *stelgis*, scraper, and *pteryx*, wing, as in *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*, the Southern Rough-winged Swallow

**Stelleri** *STEL-ler-eye*

After George Steller, German naturalist and explorer, as in *Polysticta stelleri*, Steller's Eider

**Stephanoaetus** *ste-fan-o-EE-tus*

Greek, *stephano*, crown, and *aetus*, eagle, as in *Stephanoaetus coronatus*, the Crowned Eagle

**Stercorarius** *ster-ko-RARE-ee-us*

*Stercus*, excrement, as in *Stercorarius parasiticus*, the Arctic Skua or Parasitic Jaeger, which pursues other birds to force them to regurgitate their food, the ejecta once thought to be excrement

**Sterna** *STER-na*

Latin form of the English tern, as in *Sterna hirundo*, the Common Tern

**Stictonetta** *stik-toe-NET-ta*

Greek, *stiktos*, spotted, dotted, and *netta*, duck, as in *Stictonetta naevosa*, the Freckled Duck

**Stiphornis** *stif-ROR-nis*

Greek, *stiphros*, firm, and *ornis*, a bird, as in *Stiphornis erythrorhox*, the Forest Robin, with a stocky build for an Old World Flycatcher

**Stolzmanni** *STOLZ-man-nye*

After Jan Sztolcmann, Polish ornithologist, as in *Urothraupis stolzmanni*, the Black-backed Bush Tanager

## LATIN IN ACTION

The Wattled Broadbill, *Eurylaimus steerii*, restricted to a small area on Mindanao in the Philippines, behaves like a flycatcher, sallying out from a branch to catch an insect and beating the large ones against a branch before eating them. Like other flycatchers, its bill is wide and has a small hook at the tip, but the bill is much heavier than the flycatchers'.



*Sarcophanops steerii*,  
Wattled Broadbill

**Strepera** *stre-PAIR-a*

*Streperus*, noisy, as in *Strepera fuliginosa*, the Black Currawong, a loud and noisy bird

**Streptopelia** *strep-to-PIL-ee-a*

*Strepto*, twisted, and *peleia*, dove, as in *Streptopelia turtur*, the European Turtle Dove; refers to the markings around the neck

**Stresemanni** *STREZ-man-nye*

After Erwin Stresemann, German ornithologist and collector, as in *Merulaxis stresemanni*, Stresemann's Bristlefront

**Striata**, -us *stree-AT-a/us*

Striated, as in *Butorides striata*, the Striated Heron

**Striaticeps** *stree-AT-ih-seps*

*Striata*, striated, and *ceps*, head, as in *Knipolegus striaticeps*, the Cinereous Tyrant

**Striaticollis** *stree-at-ib-KOL-lis*

*Striata*, striated, and *collis*, collar, neck, as in *Fulvetta striaticollis*, the Chinese Fulvetta



## Striatus *stree-AT-us*

*Striata*, striated, as in *Colius striatus*, the Speckled Mousebird

## Stricklandii *strik-LAND-ee-eye*

After Hugh Strickland, British geologist and naturalist, as in *Gallinago stricklandii*, the Fuegian Snipe

## Strigops *STRY-gops*

Greek, *strigos*, a night bird, and *ops*, eye, as in *Strigops habroptila*, the Kakapo, a Maori word for night parrot

## Strix *STRIKS*

Greek, *strigx*, utter shrill sounds, as in *Strix ocellata*, the Mottled Wood Owl

## Struthio *STROO-thee-o*

*Struthio*, ostrich, shortened from *struthiocamelus*, the camel sparrow, because of its size, as in *Struthio camelus*, the Common Ostrich

## Sturnella *stir-NEL-la*

Diminutive of *sturnus*, starling, as in *Sturnella magna*, the Eastern Meadowlark

## Sturnus *STIR-nus*

Starling, as in *Sturnus vulgaris*, the Common or European Starling

## Subalaris *sub-a-LAR-is*

*Sub*, under, *ala*, wing, arm, as in *Turdus subalaris*, the Eastern Slaty Thrush

*Strigops habroptila*,  
Kakapo



## Subcristata *sub-kris-TA-ta*

*Sub*, under, *cristatus*, crested, as in *Cranioleuca subcristata*, the Crested Spinetail

## Sula *SOO-la*

Icelandic, *sula*, gannet, as in *Sula nebouxii*, the Blue-footed Booby, booby from Spanish slang *bobo*, stupid

## Superba, -us *soo-PERB-a/us*

*Super*, superb, as in *Cyornis superbus*, the Bornean Blue Flycatcher

## Superciliaris *soo-per-sil-ee-AR-is*

*Supercilium*, eyebrow, as in *Camaroptera superciliaris*, the Yellow-browed Camaroptera

## Superciliosa, -um, -us

*soo-per-sil-ee-OS-a/um/us*

*Supercilium*, eyebrow, as in *Poecile superciliosus*, the White-browed Tit

## Swainsoni, -ii *SWAIN-son-eye/swain-SON-ee-eye*

After William Swainson, British naturalist and illustrator, as in *Buteo swainsoni*, Swainson's Hawk

## Swinhooi *swin-HO-ee-eye*

After Robert Swinhoe, Indian naturalist and collector, as in *Lophura swinhooi*, Swinhoe's Pheasant

## Swynnertoni, -ia *SWIN-ner-ton-eye/ee-a*

After Charles Swynnerton, Indian-born entomologist, as in *Swynnertonia swynnertoni*, Swynnerton's Robin

## Sylvaticus *sil-VAT-ib-kus*

*Sylvaticus*, of the woods, as in *Turnix sylvaticus*, the Common Buttonquail

## Sylvia *SIL-vee-a*

*Silva*, a forest, as in *Sylvia borin*, the Garden Warbler, which despite its common name frequents dense undergrowth

## Synallaxis *sin-al-LAK-sis*

From French *Synallaxe* for spinetails, as in *Synallaxis albigularis*, the Dark-breasted Spinetail

## Synthliboramphus *sin-th-lib-bo-RAM-fus*

*Synthlibo*, to press, and *ramphus*, beak, as in *Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*, the Guadalupe Murrelet, referring to the laterally compressed beak

## Syrmaticus *sir-MAT-ib-kus*

Greek, *symma*, trailing robe, as in *Syrmaticus soemmerringii*, the Copper Pheasant



*Lophura swinhoii*,  
Swinhoe's Pheasant



# MARGARET MORSE NICE

(1883–1974)

Margaret Morse Nice was an American ornithologist whose *Studies in the Life History of the Song Sparrow* (1937), became a classic, studied by every ornithology student for years afterward. Like many ornithologists, she was influenced by a bird book, in this case *Bird Craft* by Mabel Osgood Wright, whose color illustrations inspired young Margaret to start noticing birds and taking notes.



Margaret Morse Nice was a major force in changing the way ornithologists looked at birds, from checking them off to collecting data on their behavior.

hand in ornithology, publishing notes about albino Brown-headed Cowbirds, *Molothrus ater*, winter observations of birds, the behavior of the Swainson's Hawk, *Buteo swainsoni*, as well as the nesting of Mourning Doves, *Zenaidura macroura*.

The daughter of a professor of history at Amherst College in Massachusetts, Margaret received a B.S. degree in Biology in 1883 from Mt. Holyoke, where she also took courses in several languages. In 1915 she received a M.S. degree from Clark University, with a thesis on the food of the Northern Bobwhite or Bobwhite Quail, *Colinus virginianus*. She married a fellow graduate student, Leonard Nice, and they moved to Norman, Oklahoma, when Leonard became a professor of Physiology at the University of Oklahoma.

She took meticulous notes on the birds of Oklahoma and published *The Birds of Oklahoma*, after which she took a break from her ornithological studies to involve herself in research in the field of child psychology. She published 18 articles on language development in children, but kept her

She also co-authored and published ornithological papers with her husband.

Margaret Morse Nice's first published papers were primarily on the abundance and occurrence of birds in various geographic locations. Later she became interested in studying bird behavior. When in 1927 her husband joined the faculty at Ohio State University in Columbus, Margaret began ornithological studies of that area while writing up the research she had done in Oklahoma. She also published many observational papers on subjects like a second mating of a robin pair, notes on Carolina Chickadees, *Poecile carolinensis*, and some observations on the birds of Europe, which led to her attending the prestigious International Ornithological Congress in Oxford. Clearly, her most significant work during the Ohio period

"The study of nature is a limitless field, the most fascinating adventure in the world."

Margaret Morse Nice



*Melospiza melodia*,  
Song Sparrow

The 1937 "Studies in the Life History of the Song Sparrow" is one of the most well known of all bird studies.



was on Song Sparrows, *Melospiza melodia*. She spent countless hours in the field observing these birds and in 1933 published two major papers, the first entitled "The Theory of Territorialism and Its Development" and the second on the life of Song Sparrows. The latter was first published in German because she was invited to do so by a German researcher. That same year she published four additional articles on Song Sparrows, which led to her work garnering international recognition.

Margaret Morse Nice also felt a duty to inform the public about the natural world. She became a member and officer of the Columbus Audubon Society, occasionally gave nature talks, and was a frequent radio guest.

In 1937 she and her husband moved to Chicago, where she was disappointed to find that city bird life consisted mainly of House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*). But this lack of local diversity gave her the time to do library research, review the research of others, and write up some of her previous research on Song Sparrows, the development and behavior of precocial birds, and the behavior of Brown-headed Cowbirds. For the rest of her life she continued to research, review, publish, and collaborate with others, although health problems gradually slowed her down.

Although she never held an academic or research position, Margaret earned a solid reputation in the ornithological world. Animal behaviorist and Nobel laureate Nikolaas Tinbergen wrote of her: "Through your works you have become known to ornithologists

throughout the entire world as the one who laid the foundation for the population studies now so zealously pursued." Ernst Mayer, famous evolutionist, said that "she, almost single-handedly, initiated a new era in American ornithology and the only effective countermovement against the list chasing movement. She early recognized the importance of a study of bird individuals because this is the only method to get reliable life history data."

Margaret Morse Nice was honored by several professional ornithological societies, and today the Wilson Ornithological Society awards the Margaret Morse Nice medal to an outstanding researcher. She passed away in 1974 at the age of 90, a few months after her husband.

*Colinus virginianus*,  
Northern Bobwhite (also called Bobwhite Quail)

Morse Nice's 1910 study of the Bobwhite Quail estimated that each individual eats 75,000 insects and 5 million weed seeds a year.



# T

## Tabuensis *tab-oo-EN-sis*

From Tahiti and the South Seas, as in *Porzana tabuensis*, the Spotless Crake

## Tachornis *tak-OR-nis*

Greek, *tachys*, fast, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Tachornis squamata*, the Neotropical Palm Swift

## Tachybaptus *tak-ih-BAP-tus*

Greek, *tachys*, fast, and *bapto*, sink, as in *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, the Little Grebe; refers to the bird's ability to compress its feathers, pushing air out so it can quickly dive underwater

## Tachycineta *tak-ih-sin-ET-a*

Greek, *tachys*, fast, and *kineter*, moving, as in *Tachycineta albiventer*, the White-winged Swallow

## Tachyeres *tak-ee-ER-eez*

Greek, *tachys*, fast, and *eresso*, row, as in *Tachyeres brachypterus*, the Falkland Steamer Duck, which is flightless but a fast swimmer

## Tachymarptis *tak-ee-MARP-tis*

Greek, *tachys*, fast, and *marptis*, seize, as in *Tachymarptis melba*, the Alpine Swift, a fast aerial hunter of insects

## Tachyphonus *tak-ee-FONE-us*

Greek, *tachys*, fast, and *phone*, sound, as in *Tachyphonus rufiventer*, the Yellow-crested Tanager; birds of this genus have rapid songs

*Tachycineta albiventer*,  
White-winged Swallow



*Tangara chilensis*,  
Paradise Tanager

## Taczanowskii *taz-an-OW-skee-eye*

After Wladyslaw Taczanowski, Polish museum curator, as in *Cinclodes taczanowskii*, the Peruvian Seaside Cinclodes

## Tadorna *ta-DORN-a*

Celtic, *tadorna*, pied waterfowl, as in *Tadorna ferruginea*, the Ruddy Shelduck

## Taeniatus, -a *tee-nee-AT-us/a*

Greek, *taenia*, band or stripe, as in *Peucedramus taeniatus*, the Olive Warbler

## Taeniopterus *tee-nee-OP-ter-us*

Greek, *taenia*, band or stripe, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Ploceus taeniopterus*, the Northern Masked Weaver

## Taeniopygia *tee-nee-o-PIJ-ee-a*

Greek, *taenia*, band or stripe, and *puge*, rump, buttocks, as in *Taeniopygia guttata*, the Zebra Finch

## Taeniotriccus *tee-nee-o-TRIK-kus*

Greek, *taenia*, band or stripe, and *trich*, hair, as in *Taeniotriccus Andrei*, the Black-chested Tyrant

## Tahitica, -ensis *ta-HEE-ti-ka/ta-bee-ti-SEN-sis*

After Tahiti, as in *Hirundo tahitica*, the Pacific Swallow

## Tangara *tan-GAR-a*

Brazilian Tupi native name for a brightly colored bird, as in *Tangara chilensis*, the Paradise Tanager

## Tanygnathus *tan-ig-NA-thus*

Greek, *tanuo*, long, and *gnathos*, jaw, as in *Tanygnathus megalorhynchus*, the Great-billed Parrot





**Tanyiptera** *tan-ih-sip-TER-a*

Greek, *tanuo*, long, and *pteron*, wing, as in *Tanyiptera galatea*, the Common Paradise Kingfisher

**Tarsiger** *TAR-si-ger*

Greek, *tar-*, ankle, Latin, *tarsus*, a flat surface, and *ger*, bearing, carrying, as in *Tarsiger indicus*, the White-browed Bush Robin, a ground-dwelling bird

**Tasmanicus** *taz-MAN-ih-kus*

After Tasmania, Australia, as in *Corvus tasmanicus*, the Forest Raven

**Tauraco** *taw-ROCK-o*

Derived from native African name based on the bird's call, as in *Tauraco leucotis*, the White-cheeked Turaco

**Tectus** *TEK-tus*

Covered, as in *Vanellus tectus*, the Black-headed Lapwing

**Teerinki** *TER-rink-eye*

After C. G. J. Teerink, Dutch Army officer, as in *Lonchura teerinki*, the Black-breasted Manakin

**Teledromas** *te-le-DROM-as*

Greek, *tele*, far, and *dromas*, run, running, as in *Teledromas fuscus*, the Sandy Gallito, meaning small chicken, although it does not resemble one

**Telespiza** *te-le-SPY-za*

Greek, *tele*, far, and *spiza*, finch, as in *Telespiza cantans*, the Laysan Finch

**Telophorus** *tel-o-FOR-us*

Greek, *telo*, end, last, and *phorus*, bearer, as in *Telophorus viridis*, the Gorgeous Bushshrike

**Temminckii** *tem-MINK-ee-eye*

After Coenraad Temminck, Dutch ornithologist, as in *Dendrocopos temminckii*, the Sulawesi Pygmy Woodpecker

**Temnurus** *tem-NOO-rus*

Greek, *temno*, to cut, and *oura*, tail, as in *Temnurus temnurus*, the Ratchet-tailed Treepie

**Temporalis** *tem-po-RAL-is*

*Tempora*-, temple, as in *Ploceus temporalis*, Bocage's Weaver; refers to the temples of the head

**Tenebrosa** *ten-e-BRO-sa*

*Tenebrae*, darkness, as in *Gallinula tenebrosa*, the Dusky Moorhen

**Tenuirostris** *ten-oo-ee-ROSS-tris*

*Tenuis*, slender, and *rostrum*, bill, as in *Numenius tenuirostris*, the Slender-billed Curlew

**Tephrocephalus** *te-fro-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *tephros*, gray, ashy, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Seicercus tephrocephalus*, the Gray-crowned Warbler

**Tephrocotis** *te-fro-KO-tis*

Greek, *tephros*, gray, ashy, and *otos*, ear, as in *Leucosticte tephrocotis*, the Gray-crowned Rosy-finch

**Tephrodornis** *te-fro-DOR-nis*

Greek, *tephros*, gray, ashy, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Tephrodornis virgatus*, the Large Woodshrike

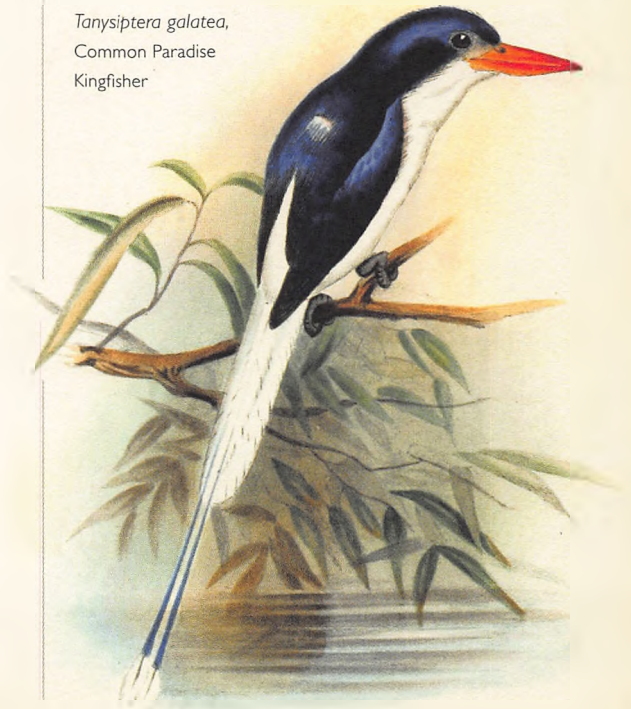
**Tephrolaema** *te-fro-LEE-ma*

Greek, *tephros*, gray, ashy, and *laemus*, throat, gullet, as in *Arizelocichla tephrolaema*, the Western Greenbul

**Tephronotus**, -um *te-fro-NO-tus/tum*

Greek, *tephros*, gray, ashy, and *notos*, back, as in *Turdus tephronotus*, the Bare-eyed Thrush

*Tanyiptera galatea*,  
Common Paradise  
Kingfisher





## Terenura *te-re-NOO-ra*

Greek, *tere*, soft, and *oura*, tail, as in *Terenura maculata*, the Streak-capped Antwren

## Terpsiphone *terp-si-FONE-ee*

Greek, *terpsis*, enjoyment, and *phone*, a sound, as in *Terpsiphone paradisi*, the Asian Paradise Flycatcher

## Terrestris *te-RESS-tris*

The ground, earth, terrestrial, as in *Zoothera terrestris*, the extinct Bonin Thrush

## Tessmanni *TESS-man-nye*

After Gunther Tessman, German botanist and anthropologist, as in *Muscicapa tessmanni*, Tessmann's Flycatcher

## Tethys *TE-this*

Greek goddess of the sea, as in *Oceanodroma tethys*, the Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel

## Tetrao *te-TRAY-o*

Greek, *tetraon*, grouse-like bird, as in *Tetrao urogallus*, the Western Capercaillie, because it looks like a big grouse

## Tetraogallus *te-tra-o-GAL-lus*

Greek, *tetraon*, grouse-like bird, and *gallus*, a cock, as in *Tetraogallus caspius*, the Caspian Snowcock

## Tetraophasis *te-tray-o-FAY-sis*

Greek, *tetraon*, grouse-like bird, and Latin, *phasis*, pheasant, as in *Tetraophasis obscurus*, Verreaux's Monal-Partridge

## Tetrax *TET-raks*

Greek, *tetraon*, game bird, as in *Tetrax tetrax*, the Little Bustard

## Tetrix *TET-riks*

Greek, *tetraon*, ground-nesting bird, as in *Lyrurus tetrix*, the Black Grouse

*Tetraophasis obscurus*,  
Verreaux's Monal-Partridge



*Thamnophilus palliatus*,  
Chestnut-backed Antshrike

## Teysmanni *TEZ-man-nye*

After Johannes Teijsmann (sic), Dutch botanist, as in *Rhipidura teysmanni*, the Rusty-bellied Fantail

## Thalasseus *tha-LAS-see-us*

Greek, *thalassa*, sea, as in *Thalasseus maximus*, the Royal Tern

## Thalassina, -us *tha-las-SEEN-a/us*

Greek, *thallasinos*, of the sea, and *hals*, sea, as in *Cissa thalassina*, the Javan Green Magpie, referring to the sea-green color of the bird

## Thalassornis *tha-la-SOR-nis*

Greek, *thalassa*, sea, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Thalassornis leuconotus*, the White-backed Duck

## Thamnophilus *tham-no-FIL-us*

Greek, *thamnos*, bush, and *philos*, loving, as in *Thamnophilus palliatus*, the Chestnut-backed Antshrike (see box)

## Thayeri *THEY-er-eye*

After John Thayer, American ornithologist and collector, as in *Larus thayeri*, Thayer's Gull

## Thinocorus *thin-o-KOR-us*

Greek, *thinos*, beach, and Latin, *corys*, lark, as in *Thinocorus rumicivorus*, the Least Seedsnipe, a shorebird found in habitats favored by larks

## Thomensis *toe-MEN-sis*

From São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea, as in *Columba thomensis*, the Sao Tome Olive Pigeon

## Thoracica, -us *thor-a-SIK-a/us*

*Thoracicus*, breast, of the chest, as in *Poospiza thoracica*, the Bay-chested Warbling-Finch

## LATIN IN ACTION

*Thamnophilus palliatus*, the Chestnut-backed Antshrike, inhabits thick brush, dense vines, and impenetrable thickets in South America. The male has a distinctive black crown while the female's is brown; typical of all of the species of *Thamnophilus* is the black and white pattern of the male being replaced by the brown of the female. *Palliatus* is a mantle, referring to the rufous color of the back, wings, and tail. As they forage for insects, they take slow, deliberate steps before they lunge for their prey. Disturbed by a potential predator, they will freeze motionless, sometimes for several minutes.

**Thraupis** *THRAW-pis*

Greek, a little bird, as in *Thraupis episcopus*, the Blue-gray Tanager

**Threskiornis** *thres-kee-OR-nis*

Greek, *threskos*, religious, and *ornis*, a bird, as in *Threskiornis moluccus*, the Australian White Ibis

**Thripadectes** *thri-pa-DEK-teez*

Greek, *thrips*, woodworm, and *dektes*, hunter, as in *Thripadectes ignobilis*, the Uniform Treehunter

**Thripophaga** *thri-po-FAY-ga*

Greek, *thrips*, woodworm, and *phagein*, devour, as in *Thripophaga cherriei*, the Orinoco Softtail

**Thryomanes** *thy-ro-MAN-eez*

Greek, *thruon*, reed, and *manes*, very fond of, as in *Thryomanes bewickii*, Bewick's Wren

**Thryothorus** *thry-o-THOR-us*

Greek, *thruon*, a reed, and *thorous*, rushing, leaping, as in *Thryothorus ludovicianus*, the Carolina Wren; they will inhabit marshes, but prefer woodlands and urban environments

**Thula** *THOO-la*

A region in the far north, probably snowy, as in *Egretta thula*, the Snowy Egret

**Thyroideus** *thy-ROY-dee-us*

Shield-like, as in *Sphyrapicus thyroideus*, Williamson's Sapsucker; may refer to black breast patch of female

**Tibetanus** *ti-be-TAN-us*

After Tibet, as in *Tetraogallus tibetanus*, the Tibetan Snowcock

**Tibialis** *ti-bee-AL-is*

Referring to the shin, tibia, as in *Neochelidon tibialis*, the White-thighed Swallow

**Tickelli**, -ae *TIK-el-lye/ee-eye*

After Samuel Tickell, British Army officer and ornithologist, as in *Cyornis tickelliae*, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher

**Tigrina**, -us *ty-GRIN-a/us*

*Tigris*, tiger, or tiger-striped, as in *Setophaga tigrina*, the Cape May Warbler

**Tigriornis** *ty-gree-OR-nis*

*Tigris*, tiger, or tiger-striped, and Greek, *ornis*, bird, as in *Tigriornis leucolopha*, the White-crested Tiger Heron

*Egretta thula*,  
Snowy Egret



**Tigrisoma** *ty-gri-SO-ma*

*Tigris*, tiger, or tiger-striped, and Greek, *soma*, body, as in

*Tigrisoma mexicanum*, the Bare-throated Tiger Heron

**Tinamus** *TIN-a-mus*

Native name from French Guinea, as in *Tinamus*

*tao*, the Gray Tinamou

**Tityra** *ti-TYE-ra*

Tityrus, a character from ancient Roman poet Virgil, as in

*Tityra cayana*, the Black-tailed Tityra

**Tockus** *TOK-us*

From Portuguese imitation of bird's call, as in *Tockus fasciatus*,

the African Pied Hornbill

**Todiramphus** *toe-di-RAM-fus*

*Todus*, small bird, and Greek, *ramphos*, bill, as in *Todiramphus*

*diops*, the Blue-and-white Kingfisher

**Todirostrum** *toe-di-ROSS-trum*

*Todus*, small bird, and *rostrum*, bill, as in *Todirostrum pictum*,

the Painted Tody-Flycatcher

**Todus** *TOE-dus*

Small bird, as in *Todus multicolor*, the Cuban Tody

**Tolmomyias** *tol-mo-MY-ee-as*

Greek, *tolma*, bold, daring, and Latin, *myias*, fly, as in

*Tolmomyias flaviventris*, the Ochre-lored Flatbill

**Topaza** *toe-PAZ-a*

*Topazus*, topaz, as in *Topaza pella*, the Crimson Topaz (see box)

**Torgos** *TOR-gos*

Greek, *torgos*, vulture, as in *Torgos tracheliotos*,

the Lappet-faced Vulture

**Torquata, -us, -eola**

*tor-KWAT-a/us/tor-kwat-ee-O-la*

*Torques*, twisted necklace, as in *Chauna torquata*, the Southern

Screamer, with a necklace of black topped by a white one

**Torquilla** *tor-KWIL-la*

*Torqueo*, twist, turn, and *-illa*, diminutive, as in *Jynx torquilla*,

the Eurasian Wryneck, named for its distinctive twisting display when threatened

**Totanus** *toe-TAN-us*

Italian, *totano*, moorhen, as in *Tringa totanus*, the Common Redshank

## LATIN IN ACTION

The Crimson Topaz, *Topaza pella*, is one of over 300 species of hummingbirds. Found only in the Americas, the males have evolved a spectacular coloration with an abundance of iridescence. It is no surprise that some of their names come from the world of gems (the Amethyst-throated Mountaingem, *Lampornis amethystinus*, and the Berylline Hummingbird, *Amazilia beryllina*) or are fancifully descriptive

(Rainbow Starfrontlet, *Coeligena iris*, and the Purple-throated Sunangel, *Heliangelus viola*).



*Topaza pella*,  
Crimson Topaz

**Townsendi** *TOWN-send-eye*

After John Townsend, American naturalist and collector,

as in *Myadestes townsendi*, Townsend's Solitaire

**Toxorhamphus** *toks-o-RAM-fus*

Greek, *toxon*, bow, and *ramphos*, bill, as in *Toxorhamphus poliopterus*, the Slaty-headed Longbill, a small bird with a long down-curved bill

**Toxostoma** *toks-o-STOM-a*

Greek, *toxon*, bow, and *stoma*, mouth, as in *Toxostoma cinereum*,

the Gray Thrasher, with a down-curved bill

**Tragopan** *TRAG-o-pan*

Greek, *tragos*, goat, and *pan*, god of the wild and flocks, as in

*Tragopan caboti*, Cabot's Tragopan; the head feather tufts on the male resemble goat horns

**Trillii** *TRAIL-lee-eye*

After Thomas Trail, Scottish zoologist and physician,

as in *Empidonax trillii*, the Willow Flycatcher

**Traversi** *TRA-ver-sye*

After Henry Travers, a New Zealand ornithologist, as in *Petroica*

*traversi*, the Black Robin



## Trichopsis *trik-OP-sis*

Greek, *thrix*, hair, and *opsis*, appearance, as in *Megascops trichopsis*, the Whiskered Screech Owl

## Tricolor *TRIK-o-lor*

Three-colored, as in *Egretta tricolor*, the Tricolored Heron

## Tridactyla *try-dak-TIL-a*

*Tri-*, three, and *dactylos*, toes, as in *Rissa tridactyla*, the Black-legged Kittiwake, whose hind toe is very small

## Trifasciatus *try-fas-see-AT-us*

*Tri-*, three, and *fasciat-*, banded, as in *Carpodacus trifasciatus*, the Three-banded Rosefinch

## Tringa *TRING-a*

Greek, *tringas*, a white-rumped water bird, as in *Tringa ochropus*, the Green Sandpiper

## Tristigma, -ata *try-STIG-ma/try-stig-MA-ta*

*Tri*, three, and Greek, *stigma*, spot, as in *Caprimulgus tristigma*, the Freckled Nightjar

## Tristis *TRIS-tis*

Sad, as in *Acridotheres tristis*, the Common Myna, from the Hindi word *maina*

## Tristrami *TRIS-tram-eye*

After Henry Tristram, British church canon and naturalist, as in *Myzomela tristrami*, the Sooty Myzomela

## Trivirgatus *try-vir-GAT-us*

*Tri*, three, and *virga*, stripe, as in *Accipiter trivirgatus*, the Crested Goshawk, with three bands on the tail

## Troglodytes *trog-lo-DITE-eez*

Greek, *troggle*, cave, and *dytes*, dweller, as in *Troglodytes rufociliatus*, the Rufous-browed Wren; refers to its habit of disappearing into cavities and crevices when hunting for invertebrates or to rest

## Trogon *TRO-gon*

Greek, *trogein*, to gnaw, as in *Trogon melanurus*, the Black-tailed Trogon; may refer to the birds' habit of gnawing into decayed trees to make a nest hole, or perhaps nibbling fruit

## Tryngites *trin-JITE-eez*

Greek, *trynga*, and *-ites*, like, as in *Tryngites subruficollis*, the Buff-breasted Sandpiper, named for its similarity to sandpipers in the *Tringa* genus

## Tschudii *CHOO-dee-eye*

After Johann Tschudi, Swiss explorer, as in *Ampeloides tschudii*, the Scaled Fruiteater

## Turdina, -us *tur-DEEN-a/us*

*Turdinus*, thrush-like, as in *Schiffornis turdina*, the Brown-winged Schiffornis or Thrush-like Mourner

## Turdoides *tur-DOY-deez*

*Turdus*, thrush, and *oides*, appearance, as in *Turdoides fulva*, the Fulvous Babbler

## Turdus *TUR-dus*

Thrush, as in *Turdus merula*, the Common Blackbird

## Turnix *TUR-niks*

*Coturnix*, quail, as in *Turnix sylvaticus*, the Common Buttonquail

## Turtur *TUR-tur*

Turtle dove, as in *Turtur afer*, the Blue-spotted Wood Dove

## Tympanuchus *tim-pan-OO-kus*

*Tympanum*, drum, and Greek, *echein*, to have, as in *Tympanuchus cupido*, the Greater Prairie Chicken; drum refers to the drumming sounds the male makes during courtship

## Tyrannus, -ulus, -iscus, -ina

*ti-RAN-nus/ti-ran-OO-lus/ti-ran-IS-kus/ti-ran-EE-na*  
Tyrant, as in *Tyrannus albogularis*, the White-throated Kingbird

## Tyto *TI-to*

Greek, *tyto*, owl, as in *Tyto capensis*, the African Grass Owl

*Egretta tricolor*,  
Tricolored Heron



# TURDUS

The Common Blackbird of Europe (*Turdus*

*merula*) and the American Robin (*T. migratorius*) are the most well-known examples of the family Turdidae, which contains about 170 thrush species in 25 genera. The true thrushes, with 65 species, are in the largest genus, *Turdus* (TUR-dus). They are medium-sized omnivorous birds known for their melodious songs and are found on every continent except Antarctica.

Pliny the Elder was a Roman author, natural historian, and philosopher who wrote *Naturalis Historia* (*Natural History*), an encyclopedia of nature. In it he gave the thrush the name *Turdus*, which survives two millennia later. The Common Blackbird's specific name, *merula*, derives from Latin and simply means blackbird; the American Robin's specific name *migratorius* means wanderer, referring to its migratory habits.

Although considered the harbinger of spring, American Robins are year-round residents throughout the US outside of Alaska and nest everywhere in North America north of Mexico. They are certainly one of the most well-known and abundant of American birds. They were named after the European Robin, *Erithacus rubecula*, which is actually a flycatcher or chat. The Common Blackbird is found throughout Europe and parts of Asia and has been introduced into Australia. It is another familiar and common bird



*Turdus merula*,  
Common Blackbird

with a population of perhaps a hundred million in Europe alone.

Thrushes often feed on the ground, eating insects, insect larvae, worms, snails, small seeds, and berries. Perhaps you have seen robins or blackbirds turning their head from side to side as they forage. They can actually hear insects crawling through the litter and worms moving in their holes.

Many true thrushes are named after locations, such as the Karoo Thrush, *T. smithi*, African Thrush, *T. pelios*, Comoros Thrush, *T. bewsberi*, Japanese Thrush, *T. cardis*, and Chinese Thrush, *T. mupinensis*. Most others are descriptive names such as the White-collared Blackbird and Bare-eyed Thrush. The former, *T. albocinctus*, Latin *albo*, white, and *cinctus*, encircling, has common and specific names that are appropriate. *T. tephronotus* (Greek *tephro*, ash-colored, and *notos*, back), the Bare-eyed

Thrush, has a more apt common name than its specific name; it is gray on the back, but the bare skin around the eye is more distinctive. In the case of *T. pallidus* (Latin, *pallidus*, pale), the Pale Thrush, neither its specific nor common name is particularly descriptive.



*Turdus albocinctus*,  
White-collared Blackbird

## U

Ultima *UL-tee-ma*

Ultimate, as in *Pterodroma ultima*, Murphy's Petrel; *ultima* seems to refer to the limited range of the bird

Ultramarina *ul-tra-mar-EEN-a*

*Ultra*, beyond, and *marina*, marine, as in *Aphelocoma ultramarina*, the Transvolcanic Jay; refers to the bird's brilliant blue coloring

Umbra *UM-bra*

*Umbra*, shade, as in *Otus umbra*, the Simeulue Scops Owl, from Simeulue Island, Indonesia

Undata, -us *un-DAT-a/us*

*Undatus*, wavelike, as in *Sylvia undata*, the Dartford Warbler

Undulata, -ua *un-doo-LAT-a/un-doo-la-TOO-a*

Having wavelike markings, as in *Chlamydotis undulata*, the Houbara Bustard

Unicolor *oo-nee-KO-lor*

*Uni-*, one, and *color*, color, as in *Haematopus unicolor*, the Variable Oystercatcher, which is all black, unlike many in the same genus

Unirufa, -us *oo-nee-ROO-fa/fus*

*Uni-*, one, single, *rufa*, rufous, as in *Cinnycerthia unirufa*, the Rufous Wren

Upupa *oo-POO-pa*

Imitation of the bird's call, as in *Upupa epops*, the Eurasian Hoopoe

Uraeginthus *oo-ree-JIN-thus*

Greek, *oura*, tail, and Latin, *aeginthus*, hedge sparrow, as in *Uraeginthus angolensis*, the Blue Waxbill

Uragus *oo-RA-gus*

Greek, *oura*, tail, and Latin, *ago*, having, as in *Uragus* (now *Carpodacus*) *sibiricus*, the Long-tailed Rosefinch

Uria *oo-REE-a*

Diving bird, as in *Uria aalge*, the Common Murre or Guillemot

Urichi *oo-rich-eye*

After Freiderich Urich, a Trinidadian naturalist, as in *Phyllomyias urichi*, Urich's Tyrannulet



*Urochroa bougueri*,  
White-tailed Hillstar

Urochroa *oo-ro-KRO-a*

Greek, *oura*, tail, and *khroa*, complexion, as in *Urochroa bougueri*, the White-tailed Hillstar

Uroglaux *OO-ro-glawks*

Greek, *oura*, tail, and *glaux*, owl, as in *Uroglaux dimorpha*, the Papuan Hawk-Owl

Uropygialis *oo-ro-pi-jee-AL-is*

*Uropygium*, rump, as in *Melanerpes uropygialis*, the Gila Woodpecker

Urosticte *oo-ro-STIK-tee*

Greek, *oura*, tail, and *stiktos*, spotted, as in *Urosticte benjamini*, the Purple-bibbed Whitetip

Urothraupis *oo-ro-THRAW-pis*

Greek, *oura*, tail, and *thraupis*, thrush, as in *Urothraupis stolzmanni*, the Black-backed Bush Tanager

Urotriorchis *oo-ro-tree-OR-kis*

Greek, *oura*, tail, and *triokhos*, kind of falcon or kite, as in *Urotriorchis macrourus*, the Long-tailed Hawk

Ussheri *USH-er-eye*

After H. B. Usher, British ornithologist, as in *Erythropitta ussheri*, the Black-crowned Pitta

Ustulatus *oo-stoo-LAT-us*

Burned, referring to the brownish color, as in *Catharus ustulatus*, Swainson's Thrush



# Foraging

Humans are omnivores, *omni* meaning all, and *vore*, to eat, and refers to our habit of eating a wide variety of foods, plant and animal. Many birds, like crows, jays, and starlings, are omnivores, but most birds are somewhat or very restricted in their food choices because of their bill shape, digestive capabilities, or physiological needs. Obviously, long-billed shorebirds, hook-billed hawks, and flat-billed swallows and swifts are adapted to capture and eat different foods. And so we have insect/arthropod-eating birds called insectivores, fruit-eating frugivores, piscivorous fish-eaters, carnivores like hawks, and nectarivores that get their sustenance from the sugary liquid of flowers.

Birds' digestive systems have evolved to break down and incorporate food items gathered by the bill. In the winter, waxwings eat a lot of berries, some of which have a tough coating. But in sixteen minutes the berry passes through the digestive system, the coating excreted and the pulp mostly digested. The population of Myrtle Warblers

(*Setophaga coronata*) in the US are so called because of their preference for Myrtle berries. These fruits are undigestible by other warblers but enable the Myrtle Warbler to winter farther north than any other North American warbler. Many tropical frugivores can eat very spicy hot peppers containing capsaicin, which is the plants' chemical defense to deter mammalian predators. Birds, however, have relatively few taste buds, enabling them to exploit food sources that other animals find distasteful. One exception is that of the Monarch butterfly whose larvae (caterpillars) eat milkweed, which contains a very distasteful alkaloid. Adult butterflies taste so incredibly bad that after one experience birds avoid Monarchs. This protects other Monarchs, as well as the non-poisonous Monarch mimic, the Viceroy butterfly. It works for a few birds as well. Some birds of the genus *Pitohui* on New Guinea eat beetles that contain a neurotoxic poison that makes the birds' skin and feathers distasteful, perhaps poisonous. This is the same poison found in the skin of poisonous frogs in Colombia.

Some birds, especially those in Corvidae, the crow and jay family, cache their food for eating later and are amazingly good at finding their secreted hoard. Nutcrackers know exactly where to dig for their nut cache even after a significant snowfall. California Scrub Jays (*Apelocoma californica*) will bury one acorn at a time, but if they see another jay observing them they will return later to rebury the acorn elsewhere to foil any theft by the observer.

*Setophaga tigrina*,  
Cape May Warbler

The Cape May Warbler, in order to compete successfully for food, specializes in eating insects on the tree tops.



Then there are those birds that prefer not to hunt their own food but take it from others.

Kleptoparasites harass other birds and steal their food (Greek, *klepto*, I steal.) Frigatebirds often chase gulls, terns, and gannets, forcing them to drop their fish or squid in midair, where it is quickly retrieved by the frigatebird.

The survival and breeding success of birds depends in large part on the food supply and their ability to exploit it. In addition to the absolute abundance of food, competition from similar species exploiting the same food sources poses a potential problem and has resulted in an elegant solution via evolution. In any habitat, birds of different species that eat similar foods have different bill and body sizes, allowing



*Ceryle rudis*,  
Pied Kingfisher

Most kingfishers have to divide the resources longitudinally since they are restricted to river banks or lake shores.

them to eat different sized foods. The Common and Crested Kingfishers, *Alcedo atthis* and *Megaceryle lugubris*, of central Japan share the river habitat this way, as do the very

similar Sharp-shinned and Cooper's Hawks (*Accipiter striatus* and *cooperii*), the latter being one-third larger than the former.

There is the classic example of warblers in the northeastern US that forage on insects but in different parts of the trees; the Cape May Warbler, *Setophaga tigrina*, feeds on the tree tops while the while the Bay-breasted Warbler, *Setophaga castanea*, prefers the center. Insect-eating species across the world all demonstrate some version of this segregation, but the most famous example is certainly that of the Galapagos (Darwin's) finches. There are 14 finch species scattered over 19 islands, with differing sets of species on each island. The beaks of the birds vary in size depending on what other species of bird are present. Evolution has fine-tuned the size of the birds' bills in response to the neighbors' so that they make the best use of the food supply.



*Accipiter cooperii*,  
Cooper's Hawk

The Cooper's Hawk is one of the bird species that is colonizing cities and suburbs as natural habitats disappear.



## V

**Validirostris** *val-ih-di-ROSS-tris*

*Validus*, strong, and *rostrum*, bill, as in *Lanius validirostris*, the Mountain Shrike

**Validus** *val-EE-dus*

Strong, as in *Corvus validus*, the Long-billed Crow

**Valisneria** *val-is-NAIR-ee-a*

After Antonio Vallisneri, Italian naturalist, as in *Aythya valisineria*, the Canvasback

**Vanellus** *van-EL-lus*

*Vannus*, fan, and *-ellus*, little, as in *Vanellus spinosus*, the Spur-winged Lapwing

**Vanga** *VANG-a*

A curved blade, as in *Vanga curvirostris*, the Hook-billed Vanga

**Varia**, -us *VAR-ee-a/us*

Variegated, as in *Strix varia*, the Northern Barred Owl



*Vermivora cyanoptera*,  
Blue-winged Warbler

**Variegata**, -us *var-ee-eh-GA-ta/tus*

Variegated, as in *Sula variegata*, the Peruvian Booby

**Vauxi** *VOKS-eye*

After William Vaux, American mineralogist and archeologist, as in *Chaetura vauxi*, Vaux's Swift

**Velatus** *vel-AH-tus*

Covered or veiled, as in *Xolmis velatus*, the White-rumped Monjita

**Veniliornis** *ven-il-ee-OR-nis*

In Roman mythology Venilia was a river nymph turned into a woodpecker, as in *Veniliornis maculifrons*, the Yellow-cared Woodpecker

**Ventralis** *ven-TRA-lis*

*Ventral*, belly, as in *Buteo ventralis*, the Rufous-tailed Hawk

**Venusta**, -us *ven-OO-sta/stus*

*Venustus*, beautiful, as in *Erythropitta venusta*, the Graceful Pitta

**Vermiculatus** *ver-mi-koo-LAT-us*

*Vermis*, worm, grub, wormlike (markings), as in *Burbinus vermiculatus*, the Water Thick-knee, with numerous wavy markings on the chest and back

**Vermivora** *ver-mi-VOR-a*

*Vermis*, worm, and *vorare*, to devour, as in *Vermivora cyanoptera*, the Blue-winged Warbler

**Verreauxi** *ver-RAWKS-eye*

After Jules Verreaux, French natural historian, and brother of Jean, as in *Coua verreauxi*, Verreaux's Coua

**Verreauxii** *ver-RAWKS-ee-eye*

After Jean Verreaux, French naturalist and collector, and brother of Jules, as in *Aquila verreauxii*, Verreaux's Eagle

**Versicolor** *ver-SIK-o-lor*

A variety of colors, as in *Amazona versicolor*, the St Lucia Amazon

**Verticalis** *ver-ti-KAL-is*

Crowned, as in *Cyanomitra verticalis*, the Green-headed Sunbird

**Vespertinus** *ves-per-TINE-us*

Of the evening, as in *Falco vespertinus*, the Red-footed Falcon

**Vestiaria** *ves-tee-AR-ee-a*

*Vestis*, cloak, -aria, resemble, as in *Vestiaria coccinea*, the Iiwi; its feathers were used to make robes for Hawaiian royalty



# VANELLUS

The genus name *Vanellus* (*van-EL-lus*), from the Latin, meaning little fan, may be the name of this genus because of the way its 25 species flap their large wings in flight or act as though they have a broken wing when protecting their nest or young. These birds are called lapwings because they distract predators by dragging, flopping, or lapping one wing on the ground as if they were wounded. The approaching intruder sees easy prey in the apparently injured bird and chases after the adult, who leads the predator a safe distance from the nest and then flies away. The species name of the Senegal Lapwing, *V. lugubris*, means mournful; since mournful does not seem to describe the bird's call, the name may be from the broken-wing act.

Like many shorebirds, *Vanellus* lapwings lay around four eggs in a shallow depression. The narrow ends of the eggs face inward to prevent them from moving. Northern Lapwings commonly nest in agricultural fields but suffer 35 to 60 percent mortality from agricultural activities, including trampling by cows and predation by crows. The young, like the eggs, are cryptically colored and leave the nest very shortly after hatching and remain with the parents for 5 to 6 weeks. Because the inside of the shell is white, the parent will remove it from the



*Vanellus vanellus*,  
Northern Lapwing

nest or even bury it so as not to attract predators.

The African Wattled Lapwing (*V. senegallus*) lives on plains where the only way to survey the area for predators is to find termite mounds. Perhaps the most well known of the genus is *V. vanellus*, the Northern Lapwing, because it is found across much of Eurasia. In Britain it is just called the

Lapwing or, in some areas, Peewit, for its call. Up until the early twentieth century, people would collect and eat Peewit eggs. By the 1950s this practice was banned in most countries, but for many years after there was a national competition in the Netherlands to collect the first Peewit egg of the year. Finding the first egg is still a popular competition, though it is no longer taken away from the nest. Due to climate change, the first egg is being found earlier and earlier each year.



*Vanellus macropterus*,  
Javan Lapwing

The Javan Lapwing has not been reliably reported since 1940 and is most likely extinct.

**Victoria**, -ae *vik-TOR-ee-a/eye*

After Queen Victoria of Great Britain, as in *Goura victoria*, the Victoria Crowned Pigeon

**Vidua** *vy-DOO-a*

From Whydah, a town in West Africa, as in *Vidua varicola*, the Jambandu Indigobird

**Vieilloti** *vee-eh-LOT-eye*

After Louis Vieillot, French ornithologist and businessman, as in *Lybius vieilloti*, Vieillot's Barbet

**Vigorsii** *vi-GOR-see-eye*

After Nicholas Vigors, Irish secretary of the Zoological Society of London, as in *Eupodotis vigorsii*, the Karoo Korhaan

**Villosus** *vil-LOS-us*

Hairy, as in *Picoides villosus*, the Hairy Woodpecker

**Violacea**, -us *vee-o-LACE-ee-a/us*

*Violaceus*, violet-colored, as in *Loxigilla violacea*, the Greater Antillean Bullfinch

**Virens** *VIR-enz*

Becoming green, as in *Contopus virens*, the Eastern Wood Pewee

**Vireo** *VIR-ee-o*

*Virere*, to be green, as in *Vireo pallens*, the Mangrove Vireo

**Virescens** *vir-es-senz*

Greenish, as in *Empidonax virescens*, the Acadian Flycatcher

**Virgata**, -us *vir-GAT-a/us*

*Virgatus*, striped or streaked, as in *Sterna virgata*, the Kerguelen Tern



*Cyanolyca viridicyanus*,  
White-collared Jay



*Sturnus vulgaris*,  
Common Starling

**Viridicata** *vir-id-ib-KA-ta*

*Viridius*, green, as in *Myiopagis viridicata*, the Greenish Elaenia

**Viridicauda** *vir-id-ih-CAW-da*

*Viridus*, green, *cauda*, tail, as in *Amazilia viridicauda*, the Green-and-white Hummingbird

**Viridicyanus** *vir-ed-ih-see-AN-us*

*Viridus*, green, and *cyaneus*, dark blue, as in *Cyanolyca viridicyanus*, the White-collared Jay

**Viridis** *vir-IH-dis*

*Viridus*, green, as in *Merops viridis*, the Blue-throated Bee-eater

**Vitellinus** *vi-tel-LINE-us*

*Vitellus*, egg yolk (color), as in *Ploceus vitellinus*, the Vitelline Masked Weaver

**Vittata**, -um, -us *vit-TAT-a/um/us*

*Vittatus*, banded, as in *Amazona vittata*, the Puerto Rican Amazon

**Vociferus** *vo-SIF-er-us*

Noisy, as in *Charadrius vociferus*, the Killdeer, common name from its call

**Vulgaris** *vul-GAR-is*

Common, vulgar, as in *Sturnus vulgaris*, the Common Starling, reflecting its former abundance

**Vultur** *VUL-tur*

A vulture, as in *Vultur gryphus*, the Andean Condor



## W

**Wagleri** *WAG-ler-eye*

After Johann Wagler, German herpetologist, as in *Ortalis wagleri*, the Rufous-bellied Chachalaca

**Wahlbergi** *VAL-berg-eye*

After Johan Wahlberg, Swedish naturalist and collector, as in *Hieraaetus wahlbergi*, Wahlberg's Eagle

**Wallacii**, -ei *wal-LACE-ee-eye/WAL-lis-eye*

After Alfred Russell Wallace, English naturalist, geographer, and evolutionary scientist, as in *Semioptera wallacii*, the Standardwing

**Watkinsi** *WAT-kinz-eye*

After Henry Watkins, British collector, as in *Gallaria watkinsi*, Watkins's Antpitta

**Wetmorei** *WET-mor-eye*

After Frank Wetmore, American ornithologist and paleontologist, as in *Rallus wetmorei*, the Plain-flanked Rail

*Urosphena whiteheadi*,  
Bornean Stubtail



## LATIN IN ACTION

The Bornean Stubtail, *Urosphena whiteheadi*, is well described as it has a very short tail. But the tail is also wedge-shaped, hence its genus name *Urosphena* (wedge-shaped tail). Found on or near the ground in mountain forests from 2,600 to 10,000 feet (800 to 3,000 meters), it creeps through the leaf litter very surreptitiously, acting more mouse-like than birdlike, looking for insects and other invertebrates. As is typical for birds that live in dense habitats, its song and call have evolved to penetrate thick foliage with minimal attenuation.

**Wetmorethraupis** *wet-mor-THRAW-pis*

After Frank Wetmore, American ornithologist and paleontologist, and *thraupis*, tanager, as in *Wetmorethraupis sterrhopteron*, the Orange-throated Tanager

**Whiteheadi** *WHITE-head-eye*

After John Whitehead, British explorer, as in *Urosphena whiteheadi*, the Bornean Stubtail (see box)

**Whitelyi**, -ana *WHITE-lee-eye/ana*

After Henry Whitely, Jr, British collector, as in *Setopagis whitelyi*, the Roraiman Nightjar

**Whytii** *WITE-ee-eye*

After Alexander Whyte, British naturalist, as in *Crithagra whytii*, the Yellow-browed Seedcater

**Whitneyi** *WIT-nee-eye*

After Josiah Whitney, American geologist and explorer, as in *Pomarea whitneyi*, the Fatuhiva Monarch

**Wilsonia** *wil-SOWN-ee-a*

After Alexander Wilson, father of American ornithology, as in *Wilsonia* (now *Cardellina*) *pusilla*, Wilson's Warbler

**Woodfordi**, -ia *WOOD-ford-eye/wood-FORD-ee-a*

After Charles Woodford, Resident Commissioner Solomon Islands, as in *Nesoclopeus woodfordi*, Woodford's Rail



## X

**Xanthocephalus** *zan-tho-se-FAL-us*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and Latin, *cephala*, head, as in *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*, the Yellow-headed Blackbird

**Xanthogaster**, -tra *zan-tho-GAS-ter/tra*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and *gaster*, belly, as in *Euphonia xanthogaster*, the Orange-bellied Euphonia

**Xanthogenys** *zan-tho-JEN-is*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and *genys*, cheek, as in *Machlolophus xanthogenys*, the Himalayan Black-lored Tit

**Xanthophrys** *zan-THO-fris*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and *ophrys*, eyebrow, as in *Pseudonestor xanthophrys*, the Maui Parrotbill

**Xanthops** *ZAN-thops*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and *ops*, face, as in *Alipiopsitta xanthops*, the Yellow-faced Parrot

**Xanthopsar** *zan-THOP-sar*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and *psar*, starling, as in *Xanthopsar flavus*, the Saffron-cowled Blackbird

**Xanthopygius** *zan-tho-PI-jee-us*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and *pugios*, rumped, as in *Crithagra xanthopygius*, the Yellow-rumped Seedeater

*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*,  
Yellow-headed Blackbird

**Xanthotis** *zan-THO-tis*

Greek, *xanthos*, yellow, and *otis*, eared, as in *Xanthotis flaviventer*, the Tawny-breasted Honeyeater

**Xantusii** *zan-TOOS-ee-eye*

After Louis Xantus de Vesey, Hungarian collector, as in *Basilinna xantusii*, Xantus's Hummingbird

**Xavieri** *ZAY-vee-er-eye*

After Xavier Dybowski, a French explorer, as in *Phyllastrephus xavieri*, Xavier's Greenbul

**Xema** *ZEE-ma*

A word created by the namer, as in *Xema sabini*, Sabine's Gull

**Xenicus** *ZEN-ih-kus*

Greek, *xenos*, stranger, -*icus*, a suffix meaning of foreign places, as in *Xenicus gilviventris*, the New Zealand Rock Wren; at the time the bird was named, New Zealand seemed very far away

**Xenopirostris** *zen-o-pi-ROSS-tris*

Greek, *xenos*, stranger, *opsis*, appearance, as in *Xenopirostris damii*, Van Dam's Vanga

**Xenops** *ZEN-ops*

Greek, *xenos*, strange, and *ops*, face or appearance, as in *Xenops minutus*, the Plain Xenops, with a laterally flattened bill with an upturned tip

**Xenus** *ZEN-us*

Greek, *xenos*, stranger, as in *Xenus cinereus*, the Terek Sandpiper; the long upcurved bill is unusual for sandpipers

**Xiphidiopicus** *zi-fi-dee-o-PYE-kus*

Greek, *xiphidion*, small sword, and *picus*, woodpecker, as in *Xiphidiopicus percussus*, the Cuban Green Woodpecker

**Xiphocolaptes** *zy-fō-ko-LAP-teez*

Greek, *xiphos*, sword, and *colaptes*, woodpecker, as in *Xiphocolaptes albicollis*, the White-throated Woodcreeper

**Xipholena** *zye-fō-LEN-a*

Greek, *xiphos*, sword, and *olene*, arm, as in *Xipholena lamellipennis*, the White-tailed Cotinga; the white primary feathers and the slightly drooped wing posture probably account for the name

**Xiphorhynchus** *zye-fō-RINK-us*

Greek, *xiphos*, sword, and Latin, *rhynchus*, bill, as in *Xiphorhynchus pardalotus*, the Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper

## Y

**Yarrellii** *yar-REL-lee-eye*

After William Yarrell, English bookseller and amateur ornithologist, as in *Spinus yarrellii*, the Yellow-faced Siskin

**Yaruqui** *YAR-u-quee*

After Yaruqui, Ecuador, as in *Phaethornis yaruqui*, the White-whiskered Hermit

**Yelkouan** *YEL-koo-an*

Turkish, *yelkovan*, wind-chaser, as in *Puffinus yelkouan*, the Yelkouan Shearwater

**Yemenensis** *ye-MEN-ensis*

After Yemen, as in *Linaria yemenensis*, the Yemen Linnert

## L A T I N I N A C T I O N

*Yucatanensis* refers to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize, a rich tropical environment with 564 known bird species, seven of which are endemic (found nowhere else in the world.) Several birds take their common names from the area, such as the Yucatan Wren, Yucatan Poorwill, Yucatan Nightjar, Yucatan Jay, Yucatan Woodpecker, and the Yucatan Flycatcher (*Myiarchus yucatanensis*). Clearly, this area is a treasure trove for insectivorous birds as there are 46 species of flycatchers in the family Tyrannidae found there, and of course many other insect eaters. The Yucatan Peninsula is also a stepping-off point for migratory flycatchers and other birds heading to North America. Many birds cross over 600 miles (1,000 kilometers) of water from the Yucatan to the US and it has to be non-stop as there are no waypoints along the route. They arrive dehydrated and exhausted and no doubt some perish, but it has worked for thousands of years, even for the tiny Ruby-throated Hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*.



*Yuhina torqueola*,  
Indochinese Yuhina

**Yersini** *YER-sin-eye*

After Alexandre Yersin, Swiss bacteriologist, as in *Trochalopteron yersini*, the Collared Laughingthrush

**Yncas** *INK-as*

After the ancient rulers of Peru, as in *Cyanocorax yncas*, the Inca Jay, part of whose range is in the Peruvian Andes

**Yucatanensis, -icus**

*yoo-ka-tan-EN-sis/you-ka-TAN-i-kus*

After Yucatan, Mexico, as in *Myiarchus yucatanensis*, the Yucatan Flycatcher (see box)

**Yuhina** *yoo-HINE-a*

Nepalese, *yubin*, as in *Yuhina torqueola*, the Indochinese Yuhina

**Yunnanensis** *yoo-nan-EN-sis*

After Yunnan, China, as in *Sitta yunnanensis*, the Yunnan Nuthatch

# ALEXANDER WILSON

(1766–1813)

Alexander Wilson is the most well-known and highly regarded ornithologist before John James Audubon's time. Wilson, born in Paisley, Scotland, grew up poor. After leaving school at the age of thirteen to work as a weaver and cloth peddler in the Scottish countryside, he began seriously writing poetry as well. His poetry became political and he ranted against the unfair treatment of weavers by their bosses. His written tirades landed him in hot water and a short stint in prison, so he eventually saved enough money to escape to America where he expected more freedom of expression. Upon arriving at the age of 28, he picked up a gun and started shooting birds as he had done in his journeys through Scotland. After wandering around Philadelphia and working at weaving, peddling, and printing, he finally found a post as a schoolteacher.

Wilson became acquainted with William Bartram, a naturalist and talented artist, who drew botanical and ornithological subjects. Wilson borrowed some of Bartram's paintings and learned to illustrate by copying them. He left his teaching job and took on the task of revising a 22-volume encyclopedia. This job provided a nice salary and connections in the publishing world. He decided on a project to describe every bird in America, an ambitious effort for someone whose artistic talents were still evolving and whose knowledge of American birds was just developing. As Wilson wrote to Bartram: "I dare say you will smile at my



Scottish-born Alexander Wilson became a highly regarded ornithologist and author/illustrator after emigrating to the US in 1794.

presumption when I tell you that I have seriously begun to make a collection of drawings of the birds to be found in Pennsylvania, or that occasionally pass through it: twenty-eight, as a beginning, I send for your opinion."

Even though he shot many birds and kept many live specimens, he still needed help in identification, but his passion and work ethic convinced his publisher to accept his proposal for a multiple-volume series called *American Ornithology*. There was one major condition: that Wilson sell subscriptions to pay for it.

After Volume I was produced, Wilson walked and rode horseback thousands of miles trying to sell subscriptions. He slept in the woods and in Indian villages, fending off a variety of hardships and illnesses. As he traveled, he observed and shot birds, collecting perhaps two-thirds of the species east of the Mississippi River. In 1810 at the age of 44, in Louisville, Kentucky, he tried to sell the plates to a storekeeper who apparently admired the work and was ready to subscribe but ultimately turned down Wilson after conferring with the store's senior business partner. The storekeeper, 25-year-old John James Audubon, preferred to be outside shooting birds and drawing them himself rather than reading about them. A story has it that the senior business partner whispered to Audubon in French



(Audubon was born in Haiti) that his (Audubon's) art was much better than Wilson's.

Audubon later claimed that he lent Wilson several paintings. This may have been a ploy to hide what many claim is plagiarism on Audubon's part. Several of Audubon's birds are very close copies of Wilson's works, and a few dozen show a distinct likeness.

From 1810 to 1812 Wilson completed a total of six volumes of his book. He made copperplate etchings that were composed of simple black lines on white paper. All the coloration had to be done by hand with watercolors. So each page, even though a "reproduction," was an original work of art. He tried to find artists to help him with this work but most did not meet his standards so he ended up doing most of the painting himself.

As Wilson traveled, he cultivated some aristocratic and moneyed friends who supported his endeavors and facilitated his travels. But overwork, constant travel, and various illnesses finally took their toll; he died in 1813 at the age of 47, some say in pursuit of a bird across a river. His legacy was the nine-volume *American Ornithology* (1808–1814), which illustrated 268 species of birds, 26 of which had not previously been known. This magnum opus made him known as the Father of American Ornithology.

The Wilson Ornithological Society was founded in 1888 and publishes a quarterly journal, *The Wilson*



*Phalaropus tricolor*,  
Wilson's Phalarope

Phalarope means coot-footed, describing the lobes on the bird's foot that help it when walking on muddy ground and swimming.

*Journal of Ornithology*. The WOS recognizes the important role of the serious amateur in ornithology.

Several species of birds were named after Alexander Wilson, including Wilson's Storm-petrel, *Oceanites oceanicus*; Wilson's Plover, *Charadrius wilsonia*; Wilson's Phalarope, *Phalaropus tricolor*; Wilson's Snipe, *Gallinago delicata*; and Wilson's Warbler, *Cardellina pusilla*.

"Particular species of birds, like different nations of men, have their congenial climes and favorite countries; but wanderers are common to both; some in search of better fare, some of adventures, others led by curiosity, and many driven by storms or accident."

Alexander Wilson, *American Ornithology, or The Natural History*  
of the Birds of the United States

## Z

**Zambesiae** *zam-BEEZ-ee-ee*

After the Zambesi River, Africa, as in *Prodotiscus zambesiae*, the Green-backed Honeybird

**Zantholeuca** *zan-tho-LOY-ka*

Greek, *xantho*, yellow, *leukos*, white, as in *Erpornis zantholeuca*, the White-bellied Erpornis

**Zaratornis** *zar-a-TOR-nis*

After Zarate, Argentina, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Zaratornis stresemanni*, the White-checked Cotinga

**Zavattariornis** *za-vat-tar-ee-OR-nis*

After Edoardo Zavattari, Italian zoologist and explorer, and *ornis*, bird, as in *Zavattariornis stresemanni*, Stresemann's Bushcrow

**Zebrilus** *ze-BRIL-us*

French, *zebre*, zebra, and *-ilus*, diminutive, as in *Zebrilus undulatus*, the Zigzag Heron

## LATIN IN ACTION

The White-throated Sparrow is aptly named as *Zonotrichia albicollis*, the white-striped or zoned small bird with a white neck. There are two populations, one with a white crown and one with a tan crown. Males of both crown colors prefer white-crowned females, but females of both crown colors prefer males with tan striped crowns. So both variations will continue to exist.

**Zeledonia** *ze-le-DON-ee-a*

After Jose Zeledon, Costa Rican naturalist and collector, as in *Zeledonia coronata*, the Wrenthrush

**Zenaida** *zen-EH-da*

After Princess Zenaide Bonaparte, as in *Zenaida auriculata*, the Eared Dove

**Zimmeri**, **-ius** *ZIM-mer-eye/zim-MARE-ee-us*

After John Zimmer, American ornithologist, as in *Scytalopus zimmeri*, Zimmer's Tapaculo

**Zonerodius** *zo-ne-RO-dee-us*

Greek, *zone*, band, and *erodios*, heron, as in *Zonerodius heliosylus*, the Forest Bittern

**Zonotrichia** *zo-no-TRIK-ee-a*

Greek, *zone*, band, and *trichias*, small bird, as in *Zonotrichia albicollis*, the White-throated Sparrow (see box)

**Zoothera** *zoo-o-THER-a*

Greek, *zoon*, animal, and *theros*, hunter, as in *Zoothera dixonii*, the Long-tailed Thrush

**Zosterops** *ZOS-ter-ops*

Greek, *zoster*, girdle, and *ops*, appearance, as in *Zosterops senegalensis*, the African Yellow White-eye

*Zonotrichia albicollis*,  
White-throated Sparrow



# ZOSTEROPS

**Z**osterops (*ZOS-ter-ops*) means girdle eye, from the Greek *zoster*, girdle, and *ops*, eye. Their common name of white-eye or speirops (Greek *speira*, circle, and *ops*) aptly describes the birds of this genus, with their wide ring of white feathers around the eyes. There are 98 species of *Zosterops*, one of the largest genera in the bird world. They live in regions of sub-Saharan Africa, Asia/Indonesia, and Australasia. Once thought to be related to nectar-feeding birds like honeyeaters because of their brush-like tongue, recent DNA evidence puts them closer to Old World warblers.

These small birds, only 3–4 inches (10–12 centimeters) long and 0.3–0.5 ounces (10–12 grams) in weight, have been very successful in a variety of habitats, climate zones, and altitudes. They are very good colonizers and easily invade disturbed habitats. The greatest number of white-eyes is found in the Solomon Islands, which are home to 11 species, but only one or two species exist on each island.

White-eyes are very social, congregating in flocks as they move through habitats in search of food while constantly calling to each other. Members of the flock apparently develop close relationships; ringing/banding studies have captured many of the same birds in a flock year after year. Flocks are sometimes small, but up to 500 birds have been counted in a single group.

One of the reasons for white-eyes' success is their ability to enter a state of torpor at night, dropping their body temperature about 41°F (5°C), resulting in a halving of their metabolic rate. At dusk white-eyes gather in small groups, but as darkness approaches, these small groups coalesce into a larger



*Zosterops kikuyuensis*,  
Kikuyu White-eye

group. In their roost, they perch so close together that the wings and tails of neighboring birds often overlap. Their need for social interaction is so strong that they accept birds of other

species, even other families, in their group. One evening roosting group in Thailand numbered over 1,000 birds!

The Japanese White-eye, *Z. japonicas*, native to Asia and the Far East, has been introduced elsewhere as a pet and for insect control, but has become a pest itself. It is now the most common land bird in Hawaii.

Several species of white-eyes are threatened by habitat destruction and the invasive Red-whiskered Bulbul, *Pycnonotus jocosus*, that preys on their eggs.

*Zosterops ficedulinus*,  
Príncipe or São Tomé White-eye (pictured left)

Islands in the Gulf of Guinea host *Zosterops ficedulina* on Príncipe and *Zosterops feae* on São Tomé but they may be the same species.





# GLOSSARY

## Binomial

The scientific name that consists of two words, the genus and species

## Breast

Area of the bird between the neck and the abdomen

## Carina

Also known as the keel, the ventral extension of the sternum (breastbone) that serves as the anchor for the breast muscles used in flight

## Cere

Latin for wax, a waxy structure that covers the base of the upper bill and usually contains the nares

## Covert

A type of feather that covers the flight and tail feathers (or the base of them) and the ears

## Crest

An extension of crown feathers above the head, either fixed or moveable

## Crown (or cap)

The top of the head

## Culmen

The upper ridge of a bird's beak

## Decurved

Downcurved, curving downward

## Endemic

Native or restricted to a certain country or area

## Extant

Still living; not extinct

## Family

The taxonomic category above genus; contains one or more genera

## Foraging

The behavior involved in finding food

## Furcula

Dim. of *furca*, fork, fused clavicle bones that help anchor the breast muscles; the wishbone

## Gastroliths

Small stones ingested and stored in the stomach to help grind food

## Genera

Plural of genus

## Genus

The category above species in the taxonomic hierarchy; contains one or more species

## Holotype

The single specimen designated as the type for naming a species

## Lamellae

Strainer-like projections of the bill edges found in some waterfowl

## Lobe

A rounded projection of a body part as lobes on the toes of a foot

## Malar

Cheek area

## Mandible

The upper and lower part of the bill; half (usually lower) of a jaw

## Nape

Back of the neck

## Nares

Nostrils

## Onomatopoeia

Words like chachalaca, hoopoe, or cuckoo that imitate or suggest the sounds associated with the bird

## Oology

The study of eggs

## Operculum

A flap of tissue that covers the nares in some birds

## Orbit

Cavity in the skull that contains the eye

## Order

The category above family in the taxonomic hierarchy that contains one or more families

## Ornithologist

A scientist who studies birds (*orni*, bird, and *ology*, the science of)

## Palmate

Having a shape similar to a hand; digits all extending from the same point

## Pelagic

Ocean going, feeding on the ocean

## Plumage

The layer of feathers that covers the bird and the arrangement, color, and pattern of those feathers

## Primary feathers

Wing feathers attached to the hand of the bird and used for propulsion

**Pygostyle**

Fused caudal vertebrae to which the retrices (tail feathers) are attached; colloquially, the pope's (or parson's) nose

**Ramphotheca**

The keratin covering of the jaws; the outer covering of the beak

**Recurved**

Curved upward

**Remige**

Feathers of the arm involved in flight (i.e. propulsion and lift)

**Retrices**

Feathers of the tail

**Rictal bristle**

Modified feathers at the corner of the mouth with a tactile sense

**Rostrum**

The beak or bill

**Rump**

The area of the bird where the tail meets the back of the bird

**Scientific name**

The binomial or trinomial name consisting of genus, species, and sometimes subspecies

**Secondary feathers**

Wing feathers attached to the ulna and used for lift

**Semipalmate**

Partly palmate; toes partly webbed

**Species**

The basic unit of taxonomic classification; a group of organisms capable of interbreeding and producing viable offspring

**Specific epithet**

Refers to the species part of the scientific name

**Superciliary**

Over the eye

**Syndactyl**

Two or more digits fused together (*syn*, together, and *dactyl*, finger)

**Systematics**

The study of the relationships of living things

**Taxonomy**

The science of classification and naming

**Tertiary Feathers**

Short, innermost flight feathers of the wing that primarily serve to cover the gap between the wing and the body in flight

**Trinomial**

The scientific name that consists of three words: the genus, species, and subspecies

**Uropygial gland**

The gland at the base of the tail that produces oil; also called the preen gland

**Vent**

The common opening for waste products

**Zygodactyl**

Two digits forward and two back (*zygo*, yoke, and *dactyl*, finger)



*Campylopterus largipennis*,  
Gray-breasted Sabrewing (p. 21)

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Roger Lederer and Carol Burr

*Bombycilla garrulus*,  
Bohemian Waxwing (p. 33)





*Passerina caerulea*,  
Blue Grosbeak (p. 39)





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